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IMPRESSIONS OF ITALY

FROM THE FRENCH OF
PAUL BOURGET

TRANSLATED BY
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TRANSLATOR OF "MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF; THE JOURNAL OF A YOUNG
ARTIST," "MORRIÑA," ETC.

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IMPRESSIONS OF ITALY.

READER, do you still cherish, in despite of unhappy political misunderstandings, a passionate admiration for Italy, and especially for the secluded spots which have longest resisted the leveling influences of cosmopolitanism? Once you have crossed the Alps do your thoughts wander, as you turn over the leaves of the Guide, to those little towns which contain two or three pictures only, but divine pictures, or pictures whose legendary fame evokes some great historical memory? Do you enjoy narratives of travel without requiring anything more from them than that they shall have been written on the spot, and that, if they have been written by a simple tourist, he shall at least be a tourist who has been the first to take pleasure in his tour? Are you content with a description merely literary—a style now out of fashion—of a picture or a statue without exacting documentary proof of its authenticity? Will you pardon an author the use of the “I”

which a severe formula qualifies as odious, although, notwithstanding its apparent fatuity, personal literature has at least the modesty not to claim for its views more than the authority of an opinion? If this be the case, and I may indeed call you, in the good old fashion, "dear reader," I submit to you, without any very great distrust, this diary of a long excursion made in the autumn of 1890 through Tuscany, Umbria, the Marches, Otranto, and Calabria, by a novelist on a holiday who has the misfortune to be neither an archæologist nor an art critic, nor a political economist nor a politician. I shall not think I have lost my time if these notes prove to you that a simple traveler, who is lacking in all these specialties, can still glean impressions outside the great classic centers and the domain reserved to the erudite in this land of beauty which we must continue to love, according to the device of all true lovers—in spite of everything.

I.

VOLTERRA, October 21, 1890.

THE Emperor declared that he could tell that he was nearing Corsica merely by the odor of the seaweed, several leagues out at sea. I fancy I could tell that I was in Tuscany by a less poetic, doubtless, but an equally certain means, only by alighting at a hotel, as I have just done, and seeing the table spread. A flask of Chianti, one of those large bottles with a long neck and a belly covered with plaited straw, swings in a metal basket, itself suspended from a copper frame. Thrushes are already served, which smell of juniper-berries even before the knife has touched them. You are attended by a waiter of polite and engaging manners, who speaks to you in an Italian beside which every other will seem to you *patois*. On the most trifling occasion he will quote you a line from Dante, like a coachman I had last year at Sienna who spoke of *l'ora del tempo e la dolce stagione* in the same natural tone in which he would have said, "It is a fine day." Meantime he transforms into as-

pirated h's all the hard initial c's; he says *huesta hasa* for *questa casa*, this house. I never hear this singular pronunciation without seeing again in imagination red Sienna, and bright Florence, and brown Pisa, and the smiling Tuscan landscape with its luxuriance and its grace, its heights crowned by castles of the Renaissance and its terraced villas, its gardens where white statues smile among the black cypresses, and its blue sky, of a blue resembling the coloring of the pictures of Paradise in the missals which aged wardens show you, in the depths of cool sacristies adorned with fading frescoes.

Shall I still feel to-morrow the delightful impression made upon me by the first sight of this secluded city, the approach to which I thought this evening so strangely wild and fantastic? To reach it I traveled by railway from Pisa to Rome for a third of the distance, I then took a local train which carried me in two hours to a station bearing the name of Volterra. But the station is in reality two hours distant from the town, this latter being situated at a height of six hundred meters, while the railway winds below in the plain along the borders of the little river Cecina, glimpses of which can be caught here and

there, gleaming in the moonlight, like fragments of a shining metal plaque. I was obliged to give my trunk to a wagoner, an active and athletic boy of fifteen, who placed it, without assistance, in his hand-cart among other boxes and baskets of fish from the Maremma. Then began a wild ride in an old-fashioned berlin, drawn at a gallop by two horses harnessed with ropes, over a road that ascends and descends hill after hill in rapid succession. Luminous points appear and disappear on the height. These are the lights of the town. Other vehicles follow, the drivers each striving to outrace the other. The wind has risen, and in a few hours we have passed from the mild autumn of the Riviera at Genoa to the early winter of the mountains. At last crenelated ramparts come into view; the vehicle enters a cypress alley darkly defined against a late evening sky, blue in the moonlight. Through the carriage window I descry by this light a column surmounted by a griffin, and dominating the immense ocean of fissured hillocks. An antique gate raises its gloomy arch. The wheels have left the road for the pavement, and rows of gloomy palaces loom up on either side until we reach the inn, also gloomy of aspect, but of cheerfully hospitable

interior, where the supper standing waiting, the bottle of Chianti, and the thrushes garnished with juniper-berries make the rough journey seem like a dream. Shall I feel to-morrow what I felt at Sienna, at San Gimignano of the beautiful towers—*delle belle torre*, at Poggibonsi, and the many other secluded spots in this province that have pleased me so greatly? I shall know this within twelve hours; but if my expectations are not realized it will be a bad omen, sufficient to make me give up the journey, through Tuscany to Perugia, which I have looked forward to so eagerly for years.

II.

VOLTERRA, October 22.

I SHALL continue my journey. The propitious gods who formerly reigned over the ancient city of Etruria have favored me with one of those first days of travel that are like a first success at play, to repeat which one goes on playing. It is a vision of the Middle Ages, this city surrounded by an unbroken girdle of ramparts where Florentine and Etruscan walls are intermingled. On either side of the paved streets, narrow as lanes, are fortified houses with barred windows. Some of these houses, more ancient than the others, have turreted roofs. At places the street broadens into a terrace commanding a view of the undulating expanse of bare and savage hills, beyond which an occasional glimpse may be caught of the shining sea, with some steamer passing by—a point in space, a trail of smoke in the air, and yet how many human destinies it carries! Evidently this Volterra was nothing more than a bastion overhanging the Maremma. Everything here still speaks of attack and

defense, of a garrison taken square by square, house by house. Is it because of the greater precautions taken by the inhabitants, or of the exceptional quality of the atmosphere on this wind-swept height, that the buildings here remain in a better state of preservation than elsewhere? Not one of these houses shows any trace of decay. Everywhere are gray buildings so dry, so exhausted of their moisture by the sun, that, in the intense blue of the October sky, their sculptured designs stand out with the distinctness of a copperplate engraving. Not a stone can have moved from its place in the past four centuries. One might fancy one's self carried back to the day after the siege of 1472, when Lorenzo de Medici took the city. In these very streets, between these very walls, on these very pavements, blood was shed so ferociously during those fatal days that even in that epoch of daily massacres the sack of Volterra inspired horror. When Lorenzo the Magnificent was lying on his death-bed in the beautiful villa Careggi, in the suburbs of Florence, whose windows looked out on a garden planted with cedars always green, with rose-bushes always in bloom, with white and pink oleanders, with saffron and red carnations, the terrified Chris-

tian reappeared in the founder of the Platonic Academy. This man of superior endowments and complex character, at once self-willed and vacillating, who united to the highest intellectual refinement cruelty unsurpassed in his epoch, trembled at the recollection of his past. What if his confessors had absolved him only through complaisance? And eager for a benediction of which he did not doubt he sent for the Dominican with the goat's face, the most bitter enemy of his family, the implacable apostle of Saint Mark, the rude Jeronimo Savonarola. The taking of Volterra was one of the three crimes for which the monk refused to absolve him, and the dying man must have seen again, in his imagination excited by the death agony, the walls, the squares, the palaces, as I, a peaceful traveler, behold them to-day. What a frame for a picture of obsession by remorse such as Dante describes! Notwithstanding the clear azure everything seems to bear a tragic stamp. On this square the façade of the palace of the Priors, with its sculptured blazonry, saw fall the head of the tyrant Belforti. This gate of the arch already rested, under the Etruscans, on its dark and massive pediments, and the rudely sculptured masks that decorate it were perhaps jeered by

Sylla's legions when they took the ill-fated city. On the side facing Sienna, the fortress erected after his victory by Lorenzo stands sharply out against the horizon, like the prow of a vessel, and in order that legend may unite its graces to the horrors of history, while the Florentine donjon bears the redoubtable name of Mastio, the Male, the other tower of the fortress, erected a hundred years earlier—and which from its more slender form has been called the Female—glories in the delightfully Shakespearean name of “the Tower of the Duke of Athens.”

Is it because of the contrast between these visions of a cruel past and the peaceful security of our own times that nowhere, not even in those little English towns of the Lake district which I found so charming, have I enjoyed a life more homelike, simple, and divinely monotonous than here? The descendants of the ancient Etruscans, who walk about in the sunshine enveloped already in their brown cloaks lined with red, wear on their faces an expression of such perfect bourgeois contentment! The children play so merrily around the doors! The artisans, busily employed in their back shops on the curious alabaster work which makes the wealth if not

the artistic glory of Volterra, seem to exercise so successfully here a trade at which they will never work elsewhere. As the days are already cold the women who pass by carry, to warm their benumbed hands, a little earthen vase full of embers, called a *scaldino*. This pretty custom has furnished a poet friend of mine with a theme for a sonnet, in a somewhat affected style, which I cannot resist the pleasure of translating—a little against its author's wishes—on account of its Tuscan coloring ; or what at least appears such to me, in the same way, perhaps, as lovers think all romances amorous :

“ In the sunny cities of my blest Tuscany—
along the narrow streets lined by antique palaces—the autumn wind blows, bearing with it the cold—of the Apennines, white with snow fallen during the night.

“ And the women walk quickly, holding in their hands—the graceful handle of the polished earthen vase—where, under gray ashes, glow the living embers—And this little fire suffices to warm them.

“ Thus in these days of the autumn of my life—when from everything around me there exhales—a cold air which chills even my hope of hope—I carry with me piously thy mem-

ory—and the fire of former caresses, glowing under the ashes—of the past, suffices to warm my heart.”

In default of the real scaldino of the dark Tuscan women, or the sentimental scaldino sung by the poet, I have, to warm me under the tramontane which is now blowing, the joyous fever of discovery which makes the poetry of travel, and which everything here feeds, from the first glimpse of the city to the indications of the Guide. This companion, at times so well, at times so ill-informed—but is not this uncertainty a charm the more?—mentions two pictures of Luca Signorelli preserved, the one in the palace of the Priors, the other in a chapel of the Duomo. It is with these that I will begin my pilgrimage, for the works of the master of Cortone do not abound in the museums, and he is an admirable master. This artist, one of the few favorably dealt with in the ferocious criticisms of Michael Angelo, seems to have been an anatomist with the airs of a grand seignior, a fresco painter with luxurious tastes. Such at least is the idea given of him by Vasari, who knew him in his old age and who tells a curious anecdote of him which, related of others also, is less credible of anyone else

than of this harsh designer of the fifteenth century, compared with whom Mantegna seems soft: "Luca," says the chronicler, "having lost a very beautiful son whom he loved tenderly, caused the body to be placed nude before him and with great constancy of soul, without tears or groans, he made a copy of it in order to have always before his eyes, thanks to the work of his hands, him whom nature had given him and whom hostile fortune had taken away." Unhappily the subjects of the two works of the painter at Volterra were not such as suited his powerful and harsh genius. That in the palace is a Madonna, surrounded by saints, and holding on her knees a Child Jesus. The little nude creature makes with its infantile hand precisely the same terrible gesture as the Christ, the judge, in the fresco of Buonarroti in the Sistine Chapel. No, this is not the Saviour, this is not the child born in the manger, between the ox and the ass, and whom, in an admirable picture in the Poldi Museum at Milan, Sandro Botticelli shows us playing with the thorns and the nails, and seeming to have assumed of humanity even the ignorant helplessness of infancy. Neither is it he whom the Sicilian tradespeople still invoke

at Christmas, fastening on the fronts of their shops slips of paper bearing the inscription, "Viva Gesu Bambino!" The Child Jesus of Luca already treats the fishermen as the Hercules of the ancient legend treated the serpents whom he strangled in his cradle. The falseness of this conception is not redeemed by finish of composition, and as for the other picture, that in the cathedral, representing the Annunciation, it has been spoiled by a too evident retouching. There are many other paintings besides these works in the two buildings mentioned, none of which gives the idea of genius, although they are attributed to such skillful artists as Ghirlandajo, Sodoma, and Gozzoli. Perhaps I may be unjust, however, being altogether captivated by a picture not set down in the Guide, and which is hidden in a Franciscan convent outside the city.

I visited this convent quite by chance, persuaded, after the disappointments of my two former visits, that I must expect nothing more from Volterra than the first impression which it had given me of a picturesque redoubt, an impression to be kept up by walks on the ramparts. In going, then, to the monastery of San Girolamo, through the unin-

teresting suburbs of the city, I only wished to obtain a distant view, from the other side of the declivity, of the sharp outlines of the walls broken by the bold projection of the Florentine fortress. Some countrywomen passed me on the way, shod with hobnailed shoes, a man's flat, round felt hat pulled down over their eyes. Their semi-savage aspect harmonized so perfectly with the general coloring of the old fortress that I should have thought myself well repaid for my walk by so perfect a picture. Therefore it was a delightful surprise when, on arriving at the convent, the monk in charge—a minor brother in a brown robe—insisted on showing me what he called the treasures of San Girolamo. He first opened for me a sort of small chapel used as a burial-place by the Inghirami, a distinguished patrician family of the city, and there, on one of the tombs, I read this melancholy epitaph, the pantheistic sentiment of which seemed strange in this Christian place :

Tutti torniamo alla gran madre antica
E il nome nostro appena si ritrova !

And above this sepulchral stone rises a marvelous wall on which Lucca della Robbia has represented in terra cotta a Last Judg-

ment, in white and blue, with an incomparable breadth of execution in an art which seems to allow only of prettiness. The face of a young man in the lower part of the composition, to the right, who is in doubt as to his salvation, and who is watching the dispensing archangel, would alone be worth a journey to this unknown church. It possesses another gem and one in my opinion still more precious, an Annunciation painted on wood by an artist of the Sienna school, known only to the historians of art—Benvenuto di Giovanni. On a background of gold the Virgin is represented, clad in a gold-embroidered robe and sitting in a field where bloom golden flowers; here and there are little touches of an exquisite delicacy. Ah, what an adorable vision! It will forever float for me between the lines of the *Vita Nuova* and the sonnets of Cino! She is, in fact, the lady of the chivalrous Middle Ages, the evangelical being who, by her purity, revived the dream of love, and she is, also, with the resigned melancholy of her smile, the *Mater Dolorosa* whose heart is to be pierced with the seven swords. Pity is to be read in the face of the beautiful angel, so visibly descended from on high, who makes the annunciation, while

Saint Michael and Saint Catherine the Martyr, the one clad in the armor of a magician, the other in a robe woven by the fairies, stand, one on either side; and at the bottom, to the left, the donor, kneeling down, displays the modest fervor of his poor mortal visage. Time has cast a veil, as it were, over this picture. Time? No, not time, but the fumes of the incense which has smoked at the foot of the altar of this little church at thousands of services during more than four hundred years. The coloring of this picture is now mysterious and dim, like the subdued light of the chapel entering through the windows. The faces of the figures have grown pallid and spiritual like those of the living Christians who have prayed here. The slight awkwardness of the drawing, the stiffness of the attitudes, the pious conventionality of the composition, give this almost unknown work a unique charm which cannot be forgotten. In the Museum of Sienna it would attract no attention, and even for me, who have spent hour after hour in that museum, Benvenuto was only one of a group of the masters of his time—Francesco di Giorgio, Neroccio di Bartolommeo Landi, Guidoccio Cozzarelli, Girolamo di Benvenuto. They are so numerous,

these pupils of the mystic Duccio and the learned Simone Martini! The union of the ideal and the conventional was as dear to the artists of that time as originality, at any cost, is to us. They were content with transmitting, they desired nothing more than to transmit a tradition, to be each a branch of the same great tree—not even a branch, a flower among many other flowers, one minute of a great day, one stage in a great doctrine. Therefore it is that a large collection of their works produces so strong an impression, and that so great a power still resides in each separate work. A something semipersonal allows the last effort to be divined through the fragment we see, which alone could have rendered this fragment possible. Sometimes, even, as in the present instance, the fragment is so delightful that for a moment it seems to mark the highest point reached by art, and for this moment all the glory of all the schools centers on the name of the poor and modest worker who, by force of unpretending merit, has produced a work of genius, like the greatest of the great.

III.

“THE siren loves the sea, and I love the past.” These words of the greatest of the later English poets, how often have I repeated them to myself in Italy, that land where the past slumbers under the present, and under this past a still more distant past, and still another under this. Under the Volterra of to-day is the Volterra of the middle ages, and under this Volterra that of the Romans and under that of the Romans that of the Etruscans. This latter rests, literally, under the earth, buried in the tombs which have already given to the light of day more than six hundred urns. These funeral caskets, of rectangular form, seem at first view intended for miniature houses. The innate feeling of the human soul has always led us to desire for the beloved *another life*; that is to say, the same life repeated, so that they may love us with the same heart, and, we could wish, in the same familiar surroundings. Thus these urns are adorned with bas-reliefs, and even now that the dead to whom they belonged

have no one left to remember them, these sculptures are the objects that attract most interest in the Museum of Volterra as well as in that of Chiusi. Although the frequent repetitions of the same subjects show that their manufacture was merely a business, we remember that these images were associated with sorrow felt more than two thousand years ago, and this is sufficient to touch the deepest cords of human sympathy. In the presence of the ruins of historic sepulchers we all resemble those legions of whom Tacitus speaks, who, traversing fatal fields, theaters of ancient battles, were moved, notwithstanding their callousness as veterans in the trade of slaughter, by what the historian magnificently calls "the uncertainty of human affairs."

The Etruscan Museum of Volterra is one of the most intelligently arranged which I have visited. Like the delightful Poldi-Pezzoli gallery at Milan—where side by side with the Botticelli which filled my thoughts yesterday is to be seen the Delilah of Carpaccio lulling Samson to sleep to the sound of a fountain dropping its tears in a green and silent garden—it was at first a private enterprise. This initiative of private persons, inherited from the old republics, and which we so often

see at the present day, both in great things and small, is the excellent foundation on which Italy has been reconstructed. The statue of the collector of funeral caskets, Monsignor Mario Guarnacci, now dead like those whose eternal repose he troubled, presides peacefully over the promenades of the sight-seers among these ruins which his learned labors have torn from the necropolis of the ancient Velathri. Almost all these caskets were carved in alabaster formerly coated with a colored glaze. A yellowish tint remains, which simulates marble. Each is covered by a lid on which the deceased is represented holding in his hand the *patera* for the last libations, with the body disproportionately small and treated without any regard for anatomical truth, while the large head is evidently sculptured with a scrupulous care as to the resemblance. This singular disproportion gives the half-sad, half-comic effect of a caricature to these misshapen figures which reveal, however, a permanent need of the race; for even at the present day in the cemeteries of Italy, among the general symbols of grief and hope, statues or busts of the dead, sculptured with a minute realism, even to the lace of a robe, the strings of a shoe, the folds of a coat,

are always to be seen. Under the portico of the cremation chamber at Milan are not the photographs of the incinerated attached to the vase which contains the white ashes of their bones? It would seem that southern sensibility is as unable now to free itself from the need of material forms as it was in the days of the ancient Etruscan civilization in which Eastern and Greek influence are inextricably blended.

This similarity of sentiment is not the only similarity revealed by these funeral monuments. The idea which the long-dead inhabitants of this corner of the world formed of the last enigma is expressed in the bas-reliefs which decorate the sides of the urns. Although the space is not very great, since they are only made to contain a residue of ashes—that “powder of the wings of Psyche,” as a modern Pagan has said—this space suffices for whole scenes in which many persons take a part. The ideas which their action is designed to represent scarcely differ from those which, even now, constitute our sole philosophy of the tomb. The theme varies but slightly, and is always the brevity of human joys, the suddenness of separation, the dread of the dangerous forces of nature,

the recollection of our own littleness—of which, however, we must render a strict account to the Judge. Here is a procession of demoniac monsters: griffins fight with men, Tritons carry away young girls, Furies spread their wings that seem to invest the stone with a shuddering horror, so real seems the quivering of the delicate nerves of the bat-like wings. Again, it is the separation of the soul from the body which forms the subject of the bas-relief. A domestic is harnessing a horse for the soul about to depart, another plays on the flute to charm it and soothe the bitterness of the distant journey. On other urns is to be seen Mercury Psychagogos. This conductor of shades remains in a corner with his *caducens*, while the dying man is exchanging adieus with his family. Elsewhere this Hermes, young, supple, graceful, even in his fatal *rôle*, is replaced by a fierce Charon represented in the act of raising a hammer to crush the body. Again, while these adieus are prolonged, an unknown personage appears, bearing on his shoulder a bag with two pockets, the one for the good, the other for the evil actions of the defunct. Yes, they are prolonged, these adieus! How hard it is for him who is about to depart to pass the column

which marks the boundary between this universe and the other! Yes, the journey to be made is long and weary, and other shades are to be seen about to make it, some on the horses which have been harnessed for them, others in litters or in boats, others in chariots, and all are met by *manes*, by the redoubtable and monstrous forms of the infernal deities. Then, as if the artists intrusted with these labors had followed the example of the poets and philosophers, with whom the brevity of life was a favorite theme in antiquity, ceaseless representations of tragic episodes seem to say to those who remain: "You weep for the death of your dear one, but think how many have already passed away, and in greater tortures, who were worth more than he—heroes, kings, princesses in the flower of joy and beauty." And the most somber episodes of Hellenic legend are one after another depicted. Now, it is the war of Thebes and the fratricidal duel of Eteócles and Polynices, now the murders of Clytemnestra and Egistheus, the adulterer; now Orestes and Pylades in Tauris, Iphigenia sacrificed, Troilus dying, Ulysses piercing with his arrows the perfidious suitors, Polyphemus, the devourer, combats of barbarians and demons. The

execution of these bas-reliefs is very unequal. Some of them reveal a skillful hand, others betray mercenary labor, work executed by wholesale. Both are equally interesting to visitors for what they teach, independently of their artistic merit. And, indeed, if we reflect upon the matter, this equality before the document must be regarded as an ironical and discouraging result of traveling in historic lands. The rudest object which has served, or which has been manufactured for, a particular use carries with it a significance at times superior to that of a precious but useless gem, an exquisite but unserviceable carving. The great law of utility which weighs so heavily on the human race manifests itself even here. What we demand from these monuments of ancient piety is not beauty of form, a dream of poetry and of light—no, it is that they shall show us the heart; and the unskilled but lifelike delineations of these stones reveal to us those hearts of other times, so like our own. When we, too, shall have rendered to our dead the tribute of our pity for what they have suffered, for what they still suffer, perhaps, when we shall have felt, when near them, a thrill of melancholy hope that we shall again behold

them, of terror because we shall be one day like them, of loss because they will never again speak to us, shall we not have exhausted all the emotions which the thought of their final resting-place can stir within us? And those emotions, *our* emotions, these urns tell us that those men had experienced them all. We use other rites than theirs; we have rid ourselves of their superstitions, but what they suffered we suffer, what they loved we love, what they feared we fear, what they mourned we mourn, and the lips of the sphinx which they at times sculptured on their mortuary vases have remained silent regarding the eternal problem for us as for them.

I desired to visit one at least of the tombs in which these urns had reposed before being transported to the Museum—a passage which was for them a death in death. For was there not still around them something of living affection while they remained in the place which had been prepared for them by loving and pious hands? The tomb into which I descended and which bears the name of the Inghirami, because it is situated near the gardens belonging to that family, is a subterranean court with many windings. It is reached by a passage excavated in a mound

and closed by a door of which a half-savage peasant keeps the key. My guide holds in his hand a terra cotta lamp, the side on which the wick is placed being prolonged in the form of a beak, an exact reproduction of the lamps found in tombs similar to this. The manufacture of these common utensils has, then, been transmitted uninterruptedly from age to age through so many political convulsions and massacres! Having descended the stairs, I perceived a sort of cave dimly illuminated by the flickering light, with stone benches disposed around, as for a banquet. On these several urns are ranged, and the statues of the dead, reclining on their lids, look like a motionless assemblage of guests assisting at a banquet. There is room for about fifty caskets on the funeral couch that runs along the gallery. Was this tomb reserved for the members of one family, whom Persephone was to call one by one to this silent rendezvous, this festival of sleep that knows no wakening? What incurable grief, what love stronger than death, have come here to mourn? What histories could these walls disclose if they were to be suddenly endowed with speech, like the Arabian mountain? Thus, in spite of myself, there

mingles with my curiosity a feeling of remorse, as for a profanation. I forget the insignificant and grotesque deformity of the figures sculptured on the lids of the urns contemplating the expression of their countenances, and I turn toward the aperture of the door in search of the pure and incorruptible light of day instead of the fantastic glow of the lamps. I notice, then, that the roots of the trees above, penetrating rock and soil, have forced their way through the vaulted roof of the entrance. The sun strikes them at this moment, giving a lace-like effect to this network of slender living fibers charged with minute drops of moisture. These shimmering pearls, in which the humidity of the earth is distilled, seem to come down to those below like tears of nature drawn from the rain, the wind, the air of heaven, from everything that renews above ground the variegated mantle of living verdure for the joy of the eyes of the living. This is the wish uttered by the Greek children, who beg pennies and offer flowers along the roads of Corfu: "May you enjoy your sight!"

IV.

COLLE, October 24.

I LEFT Volterra this morning in a carriage to go to Sienna. The road skirts San Gimignano, crosses Colle, and enters Sienna by the palace of the Turks, an elegant brick structure of the fifteenth century, and the Porta Camollia. With two little Tuscan horses going at a quick trot and which the driver reanimates, from time to time, by forcing Chianti wine down their throats, it will take eight or nine hours to make this journey. The country through which we pass shows once more how extreme luxuriance of vegetation alternates in Italy, more than anywhere else, with absolute barrenness. At first we travel mile after mile of a heath worthy of comparison with that mentioned in King Lear, so bare, so wild, and rugged does it seem, as the wind sweeps across it. The road turns back so that Volterra remains in view for a long time, the projection of the Florentine fortress always commanding the desolate expanse. My memory stored with chronicles of the town,

I call to mind the partisan wars waged there during the latter part of the fourteenth century by the Belforti, those cruel tyrants who were finally expelled during a popular revolt. This is the history of all the free cities of Italy. Then San Gimignano appears, also frowning down on the heath, but situated on a less savage height, indenting the horizon with its curious architecture. Its numerous belfries stand out gray against the intense blue of the sky, and olive trees shut it in, as in an oasis of pale verdure. I cannot see this silhouette of the city "of the beautiful towers," without feeling the wish, unrealizable just now, of making another visit to it, if only of a few hours. There is there, in the palace of the Podestà, a delicious *tondo* of Filippino Lippi, a painting round in form, which represents the angel of the Annunciation with a sorrowfully ecstatic countenance and hands long, fine, and white; he holds a branch of lilies whose half-open flowers rise above his head, and in order the better to indicate that he brings a message from one greater than himself, long rays of light, emanating from an invisible source, pass through the lilies without even touching his hair. And then is there not, at the Collegiate Church, a picture

which is the masterpiece, perhaps, of Ghirlandajo, a vision of Santa Fina, to whom a bishop, surrounded by angels, appears? The poor room in which the young saint is lying on the ground with folded hands, wrapt in ecstatic visions, has for its only furniture two wooden chairs and a table, on which a loaf of bread, a bottle with a rag for a cork, and two cut fruits show the frugal nature of his repast. The white walls serve as a background to the linen coifs of two women who are looking at the apparition, their aged faces furrowed with the experiences of life—a pure and resigned life which accepts supernatural graces without pride, as it would accept their loss without murmuring. No painter has instinctively practiced, in a greater degree than Ghirlandajo, the profound precept formulated, in one of his letters, by Millet—to paint, in people, that which lasts, the stamp of their occupation, and in regard to the action and sentiment of the occasion, to show just so much of it as is illustrative of this occupation. Precisely at the time when the great painter executed this fresco, so full of fervid piety, Savonarola was preparing himself in this same little city for his mission of reformer and martyr. These souvenirs float for me

around the distant city, which I know to be so somber and rigid in its ruin ; but in the distance the light falling upon it gives it a fairy-like aspect, with its strangely fantastic outlines and the magic of its shining stones.

The road makes a turn, and in an instant the landscape has changed. Oak groves come in sight, between which is seen the soil that has given its name to the reddish brown color called sienna. Autumn has touched the foliage, whose warm reddish gold harmonizes with this glowing hue. The purple mantle spread over the hills has for a fringe the fields in the valley where the olives with their small, dark fruit, the vines stripped of their harvest, and the mulberries already less heavily laden announce the approach of fertile Tuscany after arid Tuscany. At Colle the transition is completed. Here, in a simple inn of this other mediæval city, amid the surroundings usual in such places, where pictures of Garibaldi recount indefinitely the epopee of the Risorgimento, while the horses are resting I open the book which has been the companion of my travels. No true lover of Italy ever crosses its boundary without having within reach the poem of Dante which celebrates, in immortal verse, every corner in

the land. Here I read once more the story of Sapia, the noble lady of Sienna, who relates the defeat of her fellow-citizens at this very place :

Eran i cittadin miei presso a Colle.

—*Purg. xiii*, 115.

And she adds that seeing the rout suffered by her compatriots, whom she hated for having banished her, she was transported with so frantic a joy that she cried, in an outburst of ferocious triumph : “ I no longer fear anything from God.”

Gridando a Dio : “ Omai più non ti temo.”

Come fe il merlo per poca bonaccia.

—*Purg. xiii*, 122-123.

“ Like the blackbird for a little fine weather,” she ends ; a naïve touch which completes with a pretty rustic picture a tragic story. All Tuscany with its idyllic charms, savage or smiling, is in this poem ; and every street-corner is traced in it in blood.

V.

SIENNA, October 25.

DARKNESS, which has already set in, prevented my seeing again, as I had wished, the road which winds through a once dangerous forest from Colle to Sienna. I should have doubly enjoyed the view, as I am so familiar with the various aspects of the landscape that I could have ridden about for an indefinite length of time, driven by the coachman whom I have already mentioned, who quoted the *Divina Commedia* to me on every occasion, and who embellished for my benefit the convents, the castles, the walls scattered throughout the valley, with historical reminiscences. In these more or less legendary stories the Spaniards reappear continually, so strong has been the impression produced on the imagination of the inhabitants by the dreadful siege of 1554, during which the cruelest of the generals of Charles V., the Marquis de Marignan, conducted the campaign. Some French blood flowed at that time in defense of Sienna, where our Montluc commanded. The rude

partisan has related this episode in his life in his Commentaries in a style so bare and dry that the virile energy of the language resembles, by a sort of mysterious analogy, the silhouette of a fortress of the country. It is in books like this that we must seek for light regarding the passions for which the walls of a Volterra, a San Gimignano, a Colle, served as a theater. Such books explain the past of such cities, which, in their turn, help to make those books comprehensible. As for me, I have never been able to walk in the public square of Sienna, dominated by that tower of Mangia admired by Leonardo, without seeing, in imagination, the astonishing apparition of old Montluc when, dying of fever, and of his wounds, he was told that the inhabitants desired to surrender. Clothing himself in his armor and rubbing his face with red wine to disguise his pallor, he hastened, although scarcely able to keep on his feet, to encourage to resistance the famished people whose failing courage his spirit reanimated. Of actions like this, the redoubtable hero performed hundreds during his long life, which was one continual warfare. But he tarnished his glory, otherwise so pure, by his implacable and ferocious cruelty to the Protestants.

He appears, however, to have retained no more recollection of these scenes of carnage than the stones of the square of the Campo have retained of his harangue, and he terminates his Memoirs with this pacific sentiment: "I still remember a priory I saw situated in the mountains between Spain and France. The fancy came to me that I should like to retire there to live a peaceful life. I should have been able to see France and Spain at the same time, and if God grants me life I do not know what I may not yet do."

The great charm of revisiting a city which you know palace by palace, church by church, is that you find there three or four works of art which you regard as friends. Your conscience is at rest with respect to the others—the conscience of the tourist who wishes to see everything that is set down in the Guide—and conscience is not wrong, for these tours are seldom repeated. But when they are repeated it is so free and fine a joy to forget entirely the Guide and to go at your pleasure to the rendezvous of beauty, where those beloved works await you! Sienna, the red city, is for me the tower of which I have spoken, and the always fascinating picture of da Vinci. It is the terrace of the castle and the view of

the immense *campagna* stretching toward Rome ; it is the frescoes in the library of the *Duomo*, so vivid, so fresh after four hundred years, in which Pinturicchio has represented ten scenes in the life of Pope Pius II., Æneas Silvius Piccolomini. It is, finally, an *Eve* of Sodoma and a *torso* of a Christ Scourged, of the same painter, in the academy. I know that there are at Sienna hundreds of other works quite as important as these, if not more so ; but these affect me with that peculiar thrill which is no more to be reasoned about than love. Elsewhere we judge, we criticise ; we analyze ; here we feel.

How many times since my first visit have I returned to this library of the *Duomo* where Pinturicchio painted his masterpiece ! He was nearing his fiftieth year at the time, and, like a true artist of the Renaissance, he had already painted innumerable works. Born at Perugia, and called "the little painter" because of his short stature, or sometimes "the deaf" on account of his infirmity, he studied under Perugino and, before coming to Sienna, in 1504, he had, between the years 1480 and 1484, decorated the walls of the Sistine Chapel ; in 1485 he painted the chapels and the vault of the church of Santa Maria

del Popolo; then he redecorated, for Alexander VI., all the Borgia apartments, for Innocent VIII., the walls of the Belvedere, those of the Buffalini Chapel, at Santa Maria d'Aracoeli, and other churches. I had almost forgotten his work at Orvieto, and, after his return to his native place, the great frescoes painted by him in the Cathedral of Spello. To this catalogue of his works, which seems to us colossal, although it does not exceed the general average of production of that period, must be added a number of paintings on wood of which many were attributed, on account of their softness of expression and delicacy of style, to Perugino himself and to Raphael. The mere idea of activity so great, so fecund, so daring, so broad, is a relief from our modern feebleness and that sickly refinement where conscientious and minute application strives in vain to make up for the lack of genius.

On the walls of the Library of Sienna not one of the innumerable figures portrayed standing in magnificent edifices or in shady landscapes betrays the fatigue of an over-anxious mind, an eye overstrained, a feverish touch. Nowhere else have I found in so great a degree as in these frescoes, preserved

fresh and brilliant by the chance of a situation, what may be called the Shakspearean charm; so strongly impregnated with it are the historical dramas and romantic comedies of the great English poet. It is luxuriance, but refined luxuriance, elegance united to naturalness; something at once very civilized, very subtle, and at the same time a little savage. In them are to be found all the poetry of the Renaissance, that moment of unique flowering when the human being seemed to have attained completeness, between the Middle Ages when brute force reigned supreme and our times when culture borders so closely on morbidity. The young lords in these frescoes, mounted on horses of an almost rosy whiteness, with bridles incrustated with precious stones, display such suppleness in their haughty attitudes, so regal a luxury in their attire! So many serious and dreamy thoughts are reflected in their fine eyes! Through the foliage of the trees and around the slender pillars circulates a lighter, a more joyous and exhilarating atmosphere. The religious pomps frequently depicted in them have at once—representing, as they do, scenes in the life of a pontiff—the magnificence of a court festival, and, through the expression of

the countenances, the fervid piety of a cloistral scene. Figures with swarthy faces and strange costumes appear in them, revealing the romantic vision of the Orient which, through the Crusades and through Venice, must have haunted the dreams of the Italians of that epoch. As in certain primitive pictures, the metal ornaments, such as the trappings of the horses, and whole pieces of armor, are represented by reliefs in a species of colored stucco, and, when the afternoon sun enters through the window, it falls on the furthest wall, casting a magical light around a young emperor, the prince, truly, of this festival, who advances toward his betrothed clad in a green robe and wearing golden spurs, treading flowers under his feet. Something of the gentle Umbrian melancholy blends with and softens this apotheosis of youth and color.

The painters of this divine school of Umbria had the inestimable gift possessed by Virgil, of uniting grace with pathos, of giving expression to that luxury of tears, that dreamy languor, tinged with melancholy—an almost impersonal melancholy, vague and without any definite cause, the melancholy of a being who is sad only because he exists, a dreami-

ness almost like that of the plant, so much does it resemble the tender and helpless resignation of the motionless flowers. In the pictures of these painters the figures for the most part do not speak, do not look at one another, cannot look at one another. They do not belong to the same world. One is an angel, another a saint, a third a warrior clad in a strange cuirass. Plot and reciprocal action are impossible between them. Even in these frescoes, in which he represents living scenes and contemporary history, Pinturicchio borders closely on this style, so powerful in the midst of its apparent awkwardness. These pages, these princes, these bishops, these soldiers, are beside one another rather than with one another. They do not seem to know one another. One would say that the painter had designedly sought to portray, not actions, but states, and that the tragedy in which these characters are the actors, proceeds, besides, as if each one of them were the instrument of a sovereign and mysterious will. This peculiarity gives these young men and old priests, sustained and upheld thus by forces exterior to themselves, an air, as it were, of being, indeed, beautiful, human flowers of the tree of life. Unhappy genius! How soon, after

spreading over these walls this enchanted tapestry, did he die, and how sad was his death ! It was in 1513 ; he had just painted the Calvary which is now in Casa Borromeo, at Milan. He was seized with a fatal illness. His wife deserted him, to follow a lover, and he passed away thus, alone, despairing, some say destitute, even to the extent of suffering hunger ; he who had felt so deeply, interpreted so well, magnanimous and gentle beauty, the joy of light and the loving pity of which he was deprived.

VI.

SIENNA, October 26.

I DID not wish to spoil the impression made on me by my visit to the Duomo by going to see other paintings. We are in general too careless about these brusque alternations from one school to another school, from one ideal to another ideal. To have felt strongly a style of painting rich, free, and sane, notwithstanding its excessive refinement, like that of the friend of Perugini, is a bad preparation for the enjoyment of the morbid, almost decadent and altogether Vincian grace of the mysterious Sodoma. No master has suffered more than he from that odious criticism of anecdote-mongers, which builds up so quickly around a name an almost imperishable legend based for the most part on a prejudice springing from ignorance or antipathy. Mérimée once said that all he cared for in history was its anecdotes. I imagine that the great nihilist wished by this to signify that he believed absolutely nothing of history. Those who have had the opportunity of knowing distinguished men

intimately have soon found out that these anecdotes are, in fact, for the most part false or forged. The astute contrive to have these forgeries favorable to them. This is what is commonly called glory. Sodoma had not this cunning or this good fortune. Unhappily for him Vasari, in a too celebrated book, recorded, pell-mell, as they occurred to him, all the evil reports that an eccentric and no doubt imprudent humor could give rise to concerning an artist. At the present day writers on painting are all ready to admit that Bazzi—this was his real name—was by no means the villain depicted by his enemy. The infamous appellation which tarnishes his glory seems, besides, unfounded. It is probable that an odd taste in dress, excessively shy manners, the pride of genius, and, perhaps, the dangerous habit of calumniating himself, of which so many great men have given an example, were what first brought the painter's name into disrepute. Was he, as the Shakespeare of the sonnets seems to have been, an impassioned friend who in this way gave a color to unworthy accusations? Did the somewhat sickly refinement of his art contribute to discredit him through the prejudice which is so apt to confound complexity with corruption? I, myself,

who have studied closely the life and the individuality of certain artists very dear to me, have acquired the certainty, in opposition to the most deeply rooted of prejudices, that talent has always, and without exception, a close resemblance to the moral nature of the individual. I mean a certain sort of talent; that which consists neither in facility of execution, nor a profound knowledge of effects, but in a sympathetic interpretation of feeling. The facts of a man's life are so little significant of his real nature! The likeness of us which our actions stamp on the imagination of others is so deceptive! Do others, even, ever thoroughly understand our actions, and if they understand them are they able to unravel their hidden motives? Do we confide to others the world of thoughts that has stirred within us since we have come into existence: our inmost feelings, the secret tragedy of our hopes and our sorrows, the pangs of wounded self-love, the disappointment of ideals overthrown? Could anyone be more frank, apparently, than certain poets of our day, Musset, Heine, for instance? Yet nothing is more enigmatic, more incomprehensible than those two personalities. What shall we say of the man who, not having had words at his

disposal, has interpreted his inward visions only by the glances and the smiles of Madonnas or saints, by the attitude of an angel in a corner of a fresco, by the outline of a mouth, the curl of a lock, the arrangement of certain scenes? When these glances and these smiles, these eyes and these mouths, these gestures and these attitudes, reveal so patient and so passionate a delicacy of feeling, no biography, were it far otherwise authenticated than the rude sketches of Vasari, could make me doubt the soul which has thus manifested itself. There is only one authentic and indisputable proof regarding the nature of an artist and his work, and it is this that we must question as to the character of the man, not the malevolence or misjudgment of witnesses who are for the most part actuated by envy.

Although Bazzi was born in Piedmont and studied at Milan, under the direction of Leonardo, it is only at Sienna that his genius can be fully appreciated. His works, very unequal in merit, abound there. Like all restless natures, in whom the nerves predominate, he seems to have worked in a desultory manner, now finishing lovingly a fresco or a picture, again throwing a hasty sketch on wall or canvas. If it be true that he had the same

mystic and refined ideal as the great da Vinci, he in nowise resembled him in the slow preparation, the profound meditation, the study of art through the work in-hand, which makes of this a means rather than an end, a stage in an intellectual journey, an opportunity for mental progress. But Bazzi manifests, in his better creations, a force of spontaneity, a facile imagination, a happy ease of touch, which are ravishing. The paintings which, in recent years, have been most admired by the visitors to Sienna, are those of which Saint Catherine is the subject, and which adorn the walls of a somber chapel of San Domenico. Never, perhaps, has mysticism, with its melancholy joys, its ecstasies, and its sinkings of the soul, all that makes the magic melody of the Imitation and of the prayers of Saint Theresa, been so well interpreted as in the frescoes where the saint of the stigmata is represented in religious costume, the hands pierced by wounds, the eyes drowned in tears, swooning, in the arms of the nuns who support her, from excess of bliss at the apparition of the Saviour. But however touching this Saint Catherine may be, and although I can give no other reason for the preference than a personal taste for a symbolism more vague, less clearly

defined, I prefer to it the Christ Scourged and the Eve of the Academy. It was, then, toward these pictures that I bent my eager steps this morning under a cold blue sky, with that fervent adoration of beauty, that freshness of feeling, which Italy still bestows upon her lovers. The poet says, speaking of Petrarch :

J'irais à Rome à pied pour un sonnet de lui.

I repeated this line to myself as I walked past the lofty palaces, almost touched by the vehicles which drive so rapidly through the narrow paved streets. Here is the square, in the form of a horseshoe hollowed in at its center, here Cavour Street with its fountains ornamented with statues, here the steep street of the Fine Arts passes by the Fonte Branda thus celebrated by Dante :

Ma s'io vedessi qui l'anima trista
Di Guido, o d'Alessandro, o di lor frate
Per Fonte Branda non darei la vista.

—*Inf.* xxx, 78.

And here is the door of the Museum, a little provincial museum containing for the most part paintings taken from churches and convents. But it possesses, like that of Perugia, the rare interest of containing pic-

tures of only a single school and giving, consequently, that strong feeling of unity of ideal which is also the supreme poetry of cathedrals. A gallery like this to which thirty artists, almost all of superior merit, have contributed pictures so fraternally alike, breathes from its walls this counsel to a modern: To do his work with modesty, denying in no wise the masters whom he has followed, without pretending to a striking originality.

If we have this originality within ourselves it will break out by its own irresistible force, and its value we must not, we ought not, to be conscious of.

But I have not come here to contemplate anew the austere works of the early Siennese painters nor to moralize on the teachings of antique art, the less so as in the little hall to the right I perceive the torso of a Christ bound to a column and recognize the vivid coloring of Sodoma in this fragment of fresco, in which he realizes the seeming paradox of spiritualizing physical suffering. This bust, modeled with a marvelous knowledge of anatomy, palpitates with a pain which thinks. That which exhales from the parted lips, from the eyes gazing upward with rapt vision, is the human ecstasy of the martyr. Even if

the crown of thorns did not pierce this brow with its bloody points I should still recognize the Christ—"my Christ," as the Faust of the English poet Marlowe sighs with so tender a despair—by the splendor of this agony. And it is still the Christ who, returned from the dead, descends into limbo, watched by that Eve whose creation alone would suffice for the glory of the master. He, the Lord, enters, then, this shadowy region and, bending toward the souls, draws them out of the darkness one by one. Who is that young man, with a look of astonishment on his face, whom he takes so gently by the hand? Ah! if he were not Abel, the youth slain by the first murderer, neither Adam nor Eve, who are standing in a corner, would gaze at him as they do. The father stands with his arms folded in an ungraceful attitude, like a workman very tired of having earned his bread so long by the sweat of his brow. Eve stands with her arms folded also, idle arms ending in delicate hands unskilled in labor. The grace of her youthful form, her locks floating over her soft shoulders, her forehead and her mouth without a line of care, the smooth oval of her cheeks, all characterize her as the Virgin of the Garden of Eden, before the

fall. The Saviour, in calling her back to life, has restored to her her first beauty, but not the soul of those early days, for her eyes would not thus watch the resurrection of her son Abel, if she did not remember having mourned for him so deeply, if she did not think of the other, the sinner, toward whom the Saviour will never bend. The rapture of a redeemed soul, the melancholy of unavailing regret, the surprise of happiness after so many tears, the seriousness of repentance after having so long bent under so great a weight of responsibility, all seem to blend with the shadow cast by the unbound hair on that delicate and melancholy countenance. I say *seem*, bearing in mind the objections that may be made by the æsthetic school of the present day to an altogether sentimental interpretation like this, which attributes to a painter ideas that he has not, in truth, expressed with this precision. But to have depicted all this he must have felt it. Even if the artist in question only wished to portray, in the figure in which I read the profound emotion of a redeemed Eve, a beautiful, nude young woman in a modestly reserved attitude, why may he not have put into this figure more than he thought he put into it, since it suggests to an

observer what it suggests to me, and especially since he chose this subject rather than any other? Why, recognizing in every human action something of unconsciousness and of destiny, should we not admit that the genius of the great artists was greater than they themselves knew? And precisely this power of expressing naïvely abstract beauty—is not this the very definition of genius?

VII.

MONTE OLIVETO, October 29.

I WRITE these lines in the very last place where a Parisian novelist, who has been often rallied on his weakness for antique trifles, for plush scarfs, and little English lamps with pink globes, could be supposed to have his writing table. It is a whitewashed room with a brick floor which has not been renovated for years. A room? No, an empty cell, through whose windows is to be seen a savage landscape, a chaos of bare hillocks, a network of ravines planted with cypresses—wherever, at least, the cypress has been able to take root, for the rains wash away incessantly the gray, clayey soil. In this room, which shelters me now from the chill autumn rain, the ancient abbots of the Olivetan Order awaited, when their rule had ended, the judgment of their brothers—grand and somber symbol of another judgment, a judgment without appeal and even more terrible. The immense monastery, hidden in the wilderness, is at the present day a deserted

building. This abbey, mother of so many others since its foundation in the year 1319, in which the Siennese Bernard Tolomei retired to this desert, has been preserved from falling into ruin only by its cloister, which a decoration by Signorelli and Sodoma has entitled to be regarded as a national monument. Of all the monks who, in their white robes, formerly defiled along the vast corridors, there are now only three or four brothers in simple cassock, who remain here on sufferance. An old abbot, who has no longer the right to wear his handsome costume of the Virgin's colors, watches, under the title of intendant, over the preservation of the buildings and of the celebrated frescoes. To prevent the establishment of a hotel of a more or less cosmopolitan character at the gates of the monastery, he is occasionally obliged to consent to give a few days' hospitality to well-recommended visitors. The convent is very difficult of access on account of the bad mountain roads. It is distant five hours' journey from Sienna, and the two last hours are rough traveling. The cells are very cold, and life is very hard in this solitude where it is not easy to procure provisions. The mail, which a peasant brings from San Giovanni d'Asso, a little market

town six miles distant, comes regularly, weather permitting, as the announcements of the packet boats say. The only society is that of the abbot, who scarcely ever shows himself, except at meal-times, so occupied is the holy man with the duties of his office. Has he not farmed almost all the fields around the old convent? The unassisted labors of the monks have rendered them fruitful, and but for the energetic management of the one survivor who has remained at his post, they would no doubt have again become the wilderness they were when the holy founder came here to do penance with his two companions, Ambrose Piccolomini and Patrice Patrizzi. The only books in the library are several large volumes bound in parchment, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, which have scarcely any connection with what the newspapers, in the jargon of the day, pompously call "literary evolution." This is not my first visit, however, to this hermitage, and I could wish that it should not be the last, so strongly did I feel on the two former occasions its beneficent influence. And instead of descending now to the cloister where the two great painters have depicted the legend of St. Benoît in a series of graceful and tragic frescoes, I try to

discover the reasons of this beneficent influence and of the charm which a sojourn in this abandoned convent has for me. Some of these reasons appear to me to be of sufficiently general application to make them worth recording, and I note them down, using as a desk one of the folios of the library over which I have been dreaming for hours, the Treatise of St. Irenæus against the Gnostics. Ah! what a wonderful psychological work is this, which casts into the shade all our poor Essays. It shows how some of those maladies of the soul which we regard as altogether modern have reappeared, always the same, at times of moral crisis. I shall mention a few instances, *en passant*. Musset says in Rolla, speaking of the influence exercised by nature over elevated minds :

Elle sait des secrets qui les font assez pures
Pour que le monde entier ne les souille pas.

He seeks by this to justify the experiences of evil undergone by certain superior beings, concerning which the Valentinians had long before said : " It is impossible for spiritual natures to become corrupt whatever may be their actions." Our philosophers exercise their ingenuity in endeavoring to demonstrate the

varying complexity of the *I*, what an unhappy young man, whom I can never remember without profound emotion, called "the infinitesimal subdivision of the heart," and the Basilidian Isidore has written an entire treatise whose title may be translated freely, *Grafts of the Soul*. Our dilettanti affect to despise all affirmation and all positive teaching in the name of transcendental dialectics, yet these very Basilidians evaded martyrdom with the pretext that since a philosopher must know other men without being known by them he could not, without forfeiting this title, make public confession of his faith. Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes had already taught the strange paradox, on which the "*Fleurs du Mal*" is based, that the ideal grows clearer through the gratification of the senses and through the nostalgia which they more daringly called "the holiness of corruption." The author of "*Poèmes Barbares*" has chosen for a theme in his "*Kaïn*" the first rebel, and the Kaïnites had already, as their name indicates, hailed the murderer of Abel as the liberator of men, the adversary of the demiurge, of the unjust God who, although all-powerful, had created a wicked world. What iconoclast, even were he gifted with the fervid eloquence displayed

by the great poet Jean Richepin, in his "Blasphèmes," has surpassed in impiety those heresiarchs who carried their hatred of Jesus to the extent of including among the sacred books the Gospel of Judas, the sacrilegious apology of him who betrayed the Saviour, justifying himself by the words of Saint John (xiii, 27), "And Jesus said to him: Do quickly that which thou hast to do."

Spiritual pride, leading either to the most barren kind of dilettantism or to utter unbelief; the pride of life, bringing its punishment in the errors of sensuality—these are the two chief maladies of the soul in our day and its two greatest sins. Now, as then, they end in nihilism. This old convent, embosomed among dark cypress trees, whose red walls have stood for centuries, suggests a possible remedy for these evils merely by revealing to us the souls of those who inhabited it. The inscriptions to be read everywhere on these walls teach the lesson, first of all, to believe: that is to say, to bow down before the unknowable cause of the world, to accept the mystery which environs us as a mystery, to recognize the incomprehensible to be incomprehensible, according to the famous formula of the philosopher—but with the confidence

that this gloom and this darkness will be one day lighted up for us. A resignation which hopes—is not this, under conflicting symbols, and dogmas, the foundation of all religions? And to be resigned is not only to bear without murmuring the inevitable mystery of fate; it is to accept also, and without rebelling, the conditions imposed by this fate, our environment and the labor exacted by it. This is another of the doctrines taught by this vast religious farm. The cultivation of the ground around it, the conquest of a scanty harvest from the most arid soil, from the soft clayey earth constantly washed away, the well-laid-out plantations and the buildings erected at various times, show the unwearied industry with which the monks put in practice the Christian precept of the so unchristian Candide, “Our garden must be cultivated.” A garden, however poor, however abject we may be, a compensating fate has given to us all; we have here an occupation in which intelligent and patient industry can always win a harvest, if only of humble flowers; there are around us beings whom we can always aid to become better, to become less unhappy. For this—the philosophers of every creed and of all times have taught it—we must

practice self-renunciation, and this lesson of self-effacement every stone of the convent teaches to us along with its other lessons, still more forcibly than its other lessons. In this immense edifice, where so many human beings have lived, thought, prayed, meditated, wept, struggled, doubted, perhaps, there is not a sign which betrays the *I*, the little independent universe within the universe which each of those beings was. The individual in them had abdicated his rights as an individual, and in this abdication they had found perfect peace. Absorbed in a work higher than themselves and having no separate interests, they have passed away without leaving behind them the record of a single name. In the cloister below a large stone bears this inscription, so simple and so eloquent, in its anonymity : *Monachorum sepulcra* ; that is all. Gone? No, something of these souls remains in these stones which they have impregnated with the force of will of their abnegation. I feel them living around me in these cells, all now alike empty of their tenants but not of the thought which built them. They live, those vanished souls, in the landscape dotted with chapels. They live, above all, in my host, who watches over

the preservation of his dear convent from the poor and narrow chamber which he entered as a novice forty years ago, and which he has never since quitted. I know too well that the austere teachings of this holy dwelling cannot be followed, in all their rigor, by a child of the century, in whom the worst diseases of our age have left scars of wounds ever ready to reopen. But what of that? To have listened to them, even for an hour, is for the troubled spirit what a sojourn among the mountains is for the exhausted frame; however short it may be, some benefit is still derived from it.

And then, the paintings in this convent complete the unique charm which makes a sojourn here so delightful—a charm different from anything I have felt elsewhere. I do not know how soon I shall tire of it, but in the morning, before sitting down at my writing table, to see above the door fragments of a fresco of Sodoma, discovered under the coating of plaster—is not this, for a passionate admirer of religious art, a rapturous sensation sufficient to make one forget twenty petty discomforts? The abbot who has charge of the building has not completed the uncovering of this fresco. In renovating a perfectly white

wall sufficient plaster was by chance detached to reveal the chin, nose, and eyes, the smile, in fine, of a Madonna. The gentle prisoner, motionless under the plaster shroud in which a barbarous hand had wrapped her, looks at me as I write these lines. The tender oval of the face is as delicate, as fresh as on the day when the artist painted it as he saw it in his vision, and I have the delight of looking at this charming fragment of an unknown fresco, not cursorily, as in a museum, but at my ease and for hours at a time. At meal-times, again, I have before my vision another antique painting which dominates the large table in the refectory of the novices, that now serves as a dining room for travelers. In the afternoons when the weather is too inclement to allow of walking out of doors what an incomparable promenade is this covered and glazed cloister, on whose walls the same Sodoma painted twenty-six other frescoes and Luca Signorelli eight. They contain a large number of figures of monks executed by both these artists, who took as their subject the naïve episodes of that legend of St. Benoît which mingles together souvenirs of the last days of the Latin decadence and of the Barbarians and their first incursion. One of these artists,

Sodoma, lived here for a long time and delighted in playing all sorts of pranks, such as giving to heretics or the damned the features of those brothers for whom he had a spite, or portraying himself in the costume of a knight of Malta, surrounded by hedgehogs and guinea pigs, his favorite animals. Apparently, the brothers who served him as models almost all had the native gayety, the innocent good-humor, and the simple candor which is so often met with among churchmen. Signorelli, on the contrary, was attracted chiefly by, and most often painted, the pious peasant who wears *sabots*, tills the ground, and builds walls. He depicts beside him the *ritter* of the fifteenth century, the animal of war and of carnage, whom Bourbon led to Rome, along the Maremma. It was as a defense against bands composed of those adventurers without religion or country that the Florentine bastion was erected which protects the little alley, paved with bricks and still intact, that leads to the convent, between the pharmacy, the hostelry, the fishpond, the bakehouse, and the stables. For the monastery, secluded among these wild mountains, established in its precincts everything necessary to the maintenance of life. The water is now dried up in the deep fish-

pond, the little fort is falling into ruins, the hostelry is closed, the lizards run in and out unmolested among the stones of the bake-house, the stable shelters only the horses of transient guests, like myself, drawn here by the chance of travel, by artistic curiosity, or by their friendship for the venerable Abbé de Negro. But from the lips of the priest who watches over these dead buildings which he has seen full of life no complaint escapes, no discouragement can cause him to relax his care. It is a spectacle which I shall never forget, that of this old man watering, in the little walled garden at sundown, beds of miniature cypresses intended, when they shall have grown, to re-enforce the plantations diked in by the landslips of the ravine. I seemed to have before me a living illustration of the benevolent sentiment of the poet:

Mes arrière-neveux me devront cet ombrage.*

Ah! may the time come when the fathers, returning here, shall, indeed, owe him this peaceful shade—a time when the melancholy skepticism from which we suffer shall have at least the advantage of toleration, the only one which compensates, in some slight degree, for

* Those who come after me shall owe me this shade.

its moral misery. Then, in Italy, as well as in France, everyone will be allowed to pray, in his own fashion, to that unknown Father whom the Kabbalists called by the magnificently familiar name, "the Ancient of Days," adding these words of infinite sadness: "He cannot be known, he is an eye that is closed." Happy my venerable host, even in his secluded convent, with his Order proscribed, who, as he waters his cypresses at twilight, would answer with his invincible faith: "No; he is, on the contrary, an eye which follows us, which loves us, and which, when we do wrong, weeps for us."

VIII.

PIENZA, October 31.

I HAVE decided to make the journey in a carriage from Monte Oliveto to Chiusi—at the present day an insignificant town in the province of Perugia, once one of the twelve great cities, or Lucumonies, of the Etruscans—and I already regret my decision. It is a mode of travel, this riding in a carriage, which those who exclaim against the prosiness and vulgarity of railway-travel would do well to make a trial of. They would experience what I experience—how difficult it is to count with three things equally beyond our control—the weather, the state of the roads, and the intelligence of the driver. When I left the hospitable Monte Oliveto the rain was pouring from a leaden sky in torrents heavy enough to justify the fantastic hyperbole of old Regnier :

Et des cieux déchirés tombait un tel degout *
Que les chiens altérés pouvaient boire debout.

*And from the rent heavens so fierce a torrent fell
That the thirsty dogs could drink standing upright.

The horses had not proceeded more than a couple of leagues when one of the wheels stuck fast in a rut. The jolt threw down the books and maps which I had placed before me, in order to study the road conscientiously. I thought the chaise had broken down, as they say in the romances of the eighteenth century. I beheld myself already abandoned in the midst of this deluge, in the rain-soaked desert which lies between the convent and the little market-town of San Giovanni d'Asso. It was fortunately only one of the horse's shoes which had fallen off, the youthful driver having neglected to loosen the reins before beginning to make the ascent. This incident gives me a disquieting idea of his abilities, notwithstanding the cock's feather stuck jauntily in his felt hat. The immediate consequence of this heedlessness is that I shall spend twice the usual time on the road and reach Pienza, the first stage of my journey, in eight hours instead of four. After the first five minutes of inevitable ill-humor, I try to put in practice that one of our proverbs with which the Italians seem to be best acquainted, for they quote it on every occasion: Put a good face upon a bad matter. This is the rendering they give their classic *si farà una*

combinazione. The slow pace of the vehicle gives me an opportunity of studying more closely this wonderful landscape of fissured hillocks, of *balze*, as the inhabitants call those deep clefts that open suddenly in the friable soil. Heavens ! What a wild, gloomy country ! From time to time may be seen a farm, neglected looking in spite of the elegance of its *loggia*. Cypresses surround it, at whose feet sowers of savage aspect scatter seed in handfuls on the ground, where the turned-up clods are already beginning to dissolve. The wind has ceased, but leaden clouds still hang low on the horizon. Against this sinister and threatening background mountains loom upon all sides, each crowned with its little fortress ; one, especially—whose name, Montalcino, I learn from a passer-by—has a menacing look, with its castle and its tower outlined against the winter sky—black against black. It brings to my mind the landscapes described by Dante in his visit to the *Città di Dite* :

Quell'è il piu basso luogo, ed il più oscuro.

—*Inf. ix, 28.*

Everywhere remain traces of former wars, of battle waged between valley and valley, hill and hill, village and village. I have once

more before me a perfect specimen of those tragic times in San Quirico, the first village at which the carriage stops after leaving the insignificant San Giovanni d'Asso. Here again the Middle Ages reappear intact, in this scene unmodified by a trace of modern life, except that a bed of bloom surrounds the walls of the town and that no drawbridge defends the approach to its gates. But the porch of the church, a basilica of the ninth century, still rests on its four columns supported on lions and surmounted by symbolical beasts, crocodiles, birds, bulls, griffins; the palaces still display on their painted façades the pompous blazonry of the ancient cardinals; the paved streets still extend, narrow and gloomy, between houses with barred windows. No, nothing here has changed since the days when Catherine of Sienna frequented the baths of Vignoni in the vicinity—nothing, not even the character of the inhabitants, who crowd around the carriage to look at the stranger with eyes which, not forty years ago, would have inspired but little confidence. The insecurity of the roads in former times, indeed, is the only explanation possible of the slowness of writers on the customs of the country to perceive this fact, stated first, I

believe, by Stendhal, that the great Italian cities never interfered with the growth of the smaller ones. These latter vied with the former in the intensity of their local life, the splendor of their art, their warlike patriotism, and also, alas, in their intestine quarrels. A Florence, a Pisa, a Bologna, have enjoyed greater fame, but they were not superior, as centers of life, to the insignificant communes scattered throughout Tuscany. Nature, which works in the social world by the same processes as in the animal and vegetable worlds, has made here, as everywhere else, twenty almost identical essays before completing the two or three superior creations which continue to be the perfect types of the species. Even for the transient visitor there are evidences of this written on the stones of the smallest municipal or religious buildings which make the pride of these little towns. Only a lengthened sojourn at several different points could determine how far this local life has continued unchanged. What has been the result of the experiment of complete unity of government attempted, for the first time after so many centuries, twenty years ago? The whole future of Italy is concerned in the answer to this question.

Not being obliged, fortunately, to solve these intricate problems of political psychology, I shall content myself with describing to the best of my ability, thanks to my recollection of the frescoes of Pinturicchio, the haughty lords of other times, in the scenes which have survived them. It is at Pienza, especially, a few leagues further on, that this description becomes easy. This city, which was formerly called Corsignano, owes its name precisely to that Pope Pius II. scenes in whose life are represented in the frescoes of the library of the Duomo at Sienna. The rain has ceased, the cloudy sunset harmonizes wonderfully with the square of the cathedral, the central point of the little city. This plot of ground, half as large as the little court of the Old Louvre, is alone worth the journey, surrounded as it is by four magnificent edifices of the fifteenth century, chief among them a Piccolomini palace, built of stones almost rough hewn, massive and black as the Strozzi of Florence. Enormous rings, intended to hitch horses to, are attached to the walls between the windows of the ground floor. In the interior is a *cortile* adorned with graceful columns with sculptured capitals. On the opposite side of the square is the bishop's

palace with a façade of a graceful Venetian style, and the two other sides of the square are formed, the one by the cathedral, of a severer simplicity than is usual with the brilliant Tuscan churches, the other by the Municipium, which has a slender campanile and an arcade. A fountain—a spring surrounded by a breastwork, between two pillars beautifully wrought—erected in 1490, as the inscription indicates, adorns this little square, which is paved with large stones. Through an open space in the passage which separates the Duomo from the Piccolomini Palace a view can be had of the extensive valley through which the Orcia flows to meet the Ombrone, at the foot of mountains now white with snow. This square, gray under a leaden sky, so closely shut in by somber buildings, so devoid of vegetation and seeming to be carved out of the very mountain side, surprises the eye like Sienna or Volterra ; more perhaps, for it is more evident that these buildings served a purpose, that they were built not for show but for use. They were a useful luxury, that is to say, like the dagger handles manufactured by the goldsmiths of the same period—a necessary and, perhaps, terrible ornament. The spirit of the early days of

the Renaissance reveals itself here in all its complex elements, so strongly does the feeling of certain danger blend, in the three buildings which are not ecclesiastical, with that of beauty. It has been too generally believed—a belief which Beyle has contributed more than anyone else to disseminate—that these two sentiments are interdependent, like cause and effect. Has he not declared that there can be no supremely great artist in modern times because the idea of a perpetually menacing danger at the street corner is lacking? It was precisely by this paradox of the Italian Renaissance that he was deceived. How many periods in history, equally troublous, in which the individual had played an equally prominent part, and in which a greater amount of energy had been expended, have produced only beasts of prey with human faces? More often, indeed, the constant habit of action unfits a man for the practice of art. It seems just to say that, where the two tendencies are equally balanced, the result is astonishing. The man is then preserved from the fatal defect of dilettantism. He dares to will, to invent, and to execute. The portion of animal force necessary to the living quality of a work of art is not stifled in him by an excess of the critical

faculty. Something free and bold pervades the work executed by hands which have held the sword, and this was the case with many of the sculptors and painters of the fifteenth century, although it is still necessary to guard on this point against a too general conclusion. By the side of a brutal and quarrelsome Cellini, how many Fra Angelicos were there, enamored of silence and seclusion, how many Benozzo Gozzolis occupied only with some humble labor in the same inclosure of cemetery or convent!

It will soon be quite dark, and I have barely time to enter the cathedral, to give another glance at the pictures mentioned in the Guide. Cold shadows begin to invade the nave. Canons, seated in the stalls of the choir, are chanting an office. Little girls, ranged beside the confessional, and waiting their turn to go and tell their innocent sins, whisper and laugh together and shake their pretty heads, bright patches on the dark background of the church. Happily the old sacristan, who comes to guide me through the chapel, wears on his countenance an expression of candid simplicity which harmonizes with the peaceful feeling of a really religious moment, and the pictures which he shows me add to this feeling by

their mystic serenity, being by the early Siennese painters—two by Matteo, three by Sano di Pietro and the last, the finest, by a painter but little known, Vecchietta, whom Kugler and his translator and continuer, Sir Henry Layard, treat severely in their excellent work. But have they seen this Assumption, this Virgin in a golden robe, borne up against a golden background by a garland of angels clad in gold, who celebrate with celestial music this triumph of the mother of God? Beato has found no faces more sublime in their purity, their dignified sadness, their solemn, supernatural beauty, and yet how youthful these faces seem in their transparent bloom and naïve grace! As it is almost dark the sacristan lights a little taper, a votive offering, and, standing before the altar, passes across the picture with his aged hand, which trembles slightly, the dim, flickering flame that lights up the transparent gold, at once pale and sparkling, of the angels' robes. Their long fingers, touching celestial instruments, emerge from the darkness, then their narrow chests, then their dreamy eyes and the melancholy sweetness of the mouth, then the gold—solid seemingly—which serves as a background to the face of the Madonna, raised humbly with a look of touching acceptance. Yes, humbly

she ascends to the Son, who, having blessed her among all women, has also pierced her heart with seven sharp swords, and who takes her at last to be with him in his eternal glory. It seems like an incantation, this passing of the little flame across the sacred picture which shall occupy a place in my memory by the side of that of the convent of the Minor Brothers at Volterra ; and I repeat to myself, as I leave the church, the following lines of the poet Lafenestre who, speaking of his youthful soul, dissipated in innumerable emotions, sighs, so tenderly :

Dans les églises d'Italie,
Combien de ses lambeaux épars
Traînent sur les lèvres pâlies
Des Madones au long regard ! *

Ah ! what a charming and just definition of those eyes which will, indeed, from the depths of this secluded chapel, follow you pensively through life, and communicate to you the sadness of a heart like that which the old painters allow to be divined in the eyes of their Madonnas—a heart capable of all purity and all tenderness in the midst of every suffering !

* In the churches of Italy,
How many of its scattered fragments
Hang on the pallid lips
Of sad-eyed Madonnas!

IX.

MONTEPULCIANO, November 1.

THE road from Pienza to Montepulciano brings us again into a well-wooded country, in contrast with the sort of gray bare moor through which we have traveled almost continuously since leaving Sienna. The red oaks reappear upon the hills. The sky is parti-colored, like the costume of the figures in the frescoes, a gray cloudy expanse with here and there a blue and sunny patch, and this charm of contrast constantly presents itself in the landscape, at once smiling and tragic, the landscape of mediæval Italy. A succession of fortified villages rises frowningly above the wooded heights. Every knoll has its castellated villa, yellow with age, approached by a long cypress alley, which from a distance looks like a fantastic army of black-robed pilgrims. And as if nature, herself an artist in this land of artists, had wished to symbolize under one image, on this remote confine of Tuscany, all the ancient wars, crowning the species of promontory which rises above the undulating

expanse is a fortress, Montepulciano, a gem of savage beauty, set in its rampart, sharply cut as a geometrical figure, and around which the road winds. But beyond this fortress stretches a valley, and beyond this valley another line of mountains softly veiled by a violet mist which rises from the three lakes—mysterious bluish opals, with which this broad valley is incrustated. Their vaporous waters seem to sleep on this autumnal morning, like beautiful eyes rapt in dreamy ecstasy. Yet the largest of the three lakes bears a tragic name—Thrasymene. For me, however, the valley, and the three lakes, and the violet mountains are Umbria—Umbria, the spot which witnessed the dawn of the most touching dream of art, at once the most tenderly mystic and the most human the world has ever seen, and the memory of Perugino effaces in my imagination that of Hannibal!

The carriage has passed under a long archway and, although my eyes have been habituated, for several days past, to the sight of this austere architecture, I am struck by this new defile bordered by palaces, which is called the Great Street of this little city. The heraldic devices have, indeed, been torn from the walls of these palaces; here and there, shops

have been established on their ground-floors; further on is a *drogheria*, further on still a café, elsewhere is a lotto office, where barbers, servants, and country-people play, on the strength of their own dreams or those of their masters, *graziocissimi* or *simpatieissimi* numbers, as they say. Linen is hanging out of some of the windows, and other windows are walled up. Still others have become woefully dilapidated through neglect. Notwithstanding this, the magnificence of the life of former times is as strikingly manifest here as at Sienna; and the birthplace of Angelo Poliziano, is, in truth, in harmony with the visions of a splendid existence evoked by the name of Lorenzo's favorite. I count more than fifty of these palaces before arriving at the inn which, also established in an ancient palace—oh, mockery of greatness!—bears the name of Marzocco, the symbolical lion of Florence; and the lion of the glorious blazon stands, in fact, on a column, recalling the ancient subjection to which the great Republic finally reduced the little one.

Let me make a digression here to protest against the too prevailing prejudice which causes so many travelers to hesitate to venture into the smaller Italian cities; namely, that,

with the exception of the great hotels, there is no place on the peninsula where food and lodging can be found. The truth is that in no country, perhaps, is there so great a difference as in this between hotels of the first and second class. Nothing can be more detestable or better organized to exploit the traveler, without giving him anything in return, than a sham great hotel in Italy. In exchange I have never, in any country, met with anything more delightful than the cordiality and good humor universal in the provincial *locanda* frequented by officers, engineers, and lawyers on circuit. At Volterra, at Colle, at Sienna, at Pienza, at Rapallo, on the Riviera, before abandoning myself completely to what a witty friend of mine calls *Trippism*, from the English word *trip*—with the device: “Brother, I must go,” I have found everywhere the same inn, furnished without luxury but clean, managed by a single family. The father cooks, the daughter waits at table, a sister keeps the bar, the mother and the cousin attend to the rooms. A simple and cordial bourgeois atmosphere reigns in the dwelling. There is no table d’hôte, but they bring for your inspection the partridge, the thrushes, the larks, the red mullet, the mushrooms, the fowl’s liver, the white

truffles which are to serve for your repast. No wine card is lying at hand in the restaurant, with a long list of the various Château Poisons which would forever disgrace Bordeaux, if it were not well known that there is not in them the juice of a single grape grown on a Bordeaux vine. In exchange, everyone in the house, from the host himself to the servant boy, drinks the genuine wine of the country; and the wine of Montepulciano has that aroma of flowers which made certain wines of his native Touraine so dear to the sober Balzac. In these secluded inns you will meet with no Gallophobe newspaper, no allusion to contemporary politics and its subtilities. The ancient community of the Latin race manifests itself in the friendliness with which these people wait on you, ready to take you themselves to see the sights of their city; thoughtful to assure, by letter of recommendation, the comfort of the rest of your journey; in short in a welcome so gracious as to make you forget that the chimneys smoke, that the scant carpets, of the thinnest possible felt, do not half cover the brick floors, that the windows do not always close. But if the sky has grown clear again, what does all this matter to you?

What does it matter, especially, if the

street is a scene of enchantment? And all the streets of Montepulciano possess that melancholy and powerful fascination exercised by the past. It is the eve of All Souls', and the cloudy sky of All Saint's is in strange harmony with this city of by-gone days, and with the thoughts suggested by this festival—the most touching of all festivals, perhaps, and assuredly the most human, the most conformable with the invincible needs of the heart. How is it possible not to feel the profound poetry of the sentiment of solidarity of the living and the dead by which the merits of the saints may atone for our sins, and by which our merits may atone for the sins of the dear ones we have lost in the midst of these scenes, in which the thoughts of past generations still palpitate in their works, kindling our enthusiasm. Those men of long-past ages fancied, no doubt, that they were building these palaces for themselves and for their children. They lived hardly long enough to see them finished. A single lifetime is so short, even to realize the project of building a house. How many of their race survive, and those who do survive, do they dwell in these palaces? No. It is for us that those men of past ages built these dwellings; for us, before

whom, as we pass under their empty balconies, they call up visions of heroism, of grace and beauty. It was for us that they defended their city and adorned it with those jewels which are the just pride of every commune, a municipium and a Duomo. Of those two buildings only the first was completed. The poor cathedral stands on the square, with its unfinished façade, a melancholy red brick wall which still awaits its marble facing. We might apply to it the beautiful line of Virgil, the most Italian of poets, who, with his profound sensibility, seems to have felt a sadness exhale everywhere from this land where, even in his day, there was already too much history, too many ruins—the melancholy

Pendent opera interrupta.

Nor was the interior of the building enriched, as is generally the case, by the profusion of works of art which bear witness to the political triumphs of a city. This building, however, would not be worthy of Tuscany if it did not contain some work of incomparable splendor. There are in it, in fact, two statues which, of themselves alone, would suffice for the glory of an artist. Yet they are only the remains of a tomb constructed in 1428 by

Michelozzo Michelozzi, a pupil of Donatello, for Aragazzi, the secretary of Pope Martin V. The tradition says that the Florentine master worked, himself, on this sepulcher, which an inexplicable vandalism has dispersed throughout the interior of the church. Two of the bas-reliefs have been barbarously set in the pillars at the entrance. The large marble tomb, on which lies the statue of its occupant, is between the two doors; another bas-relief is near the chief altar, on either side of which stand the two statues which stood beside the sarcophagus. One of them—the figure of a woman with a resigned and sweet expression, holding a torch in her hand—represents Faith. She seems to smile at death, for she smiles upon a tomb with the profound peace in her heart of which the Book speaks: “My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; I give it to you, not as the world giveth it.” The other statue is also the figure of a woman—a woman with stern features and short curling locks. She clasps an inkstand in her arms. Her hand seems to have dropped the pen with which, impassive, she was about to make some record. Not a wrinkle disfigures her countenance, convulsed, notwithstanding, with anguish; but neither on her forehead nor around

her still youthful mouth is there a trace of freshness to indicate that she had ever indulged in a happy feeling or ever had a moment of freedom from care. All the irrepressible sadness of great but impotent force may be read on this face, whose beauty, however, has won its secret from life; it is Science, overcome with terror in face of the great enigma. Up to this hour she has, one feels, so haughtily pursued her course that, forced to stop before a forever insolvable problem, she yet will not surrender. But her whole being shrinks; her eyes shed no tears, her lips utter no groan, but she stands motionless, fascinated by a spectacle which her reason refuses to believe but which she yet cannot deny, stupefied by what she comprehends yet does not comprehend. The conflict between the real and the ideal depicted on this face, the harshness and vigor of treatment of the whole figure, and its intensity of expression transform this work, conceived in the middle of the Renaissance, into an anticipated illustration of a poem of Poe or Baudelaire. This creature is at once so touching and so repellent, so despairingly helpless and crushed, and yet her anguish is tainted by pride. This pride prevents, it will forever prevent, her sadness

from becoming the instrument of health and revelation. This agonized soul will continue to suffer without accomplishing anything ; adding suffering to suffering, as shadow is added to shadow in a night which has no morning. I know that the galleries and churches of Montepulciano must contain many paintings and sculptures besides this worthy of examination, but, in traveling, it is a good maxim when one has received an impression of extreme beauty to keep it undisturbed by any subsequent impression. For this reason I did not go to see any other work of art, and the last of the Tuscan cities which I shall have visited will remain in my memory, a vision of an ancient palace standing beside a cathedral in which this statue of impotent Science forever shudders, and beyond this cathedral a terrace commanding a view of Umbria, the country of Francis of Assisi, of the holy monk who had so happy a faith.

X.

CHIUSI, November 2.

THE descent from Montepulciano to Chiusi is a descent from wild Tuscany to smiling Umbria, a delightful approach to a deep valley rendered still more delightful, on this morning of All Souls' day, by a sky from which every cloud has at last vanished. Instead of the sharply defined outlines of Tuscany, here everything is seen in softened contours. The mist that rises from the little lakes of Montepulciano and Chiusi mingles with the fog which floats, lower down, over Thrasymentum; forming a vaporous veil, hung by fairy hands, as it were, over the spreading chestnuts, touched with gold, the bluish olives, the reddening vines, the broad lustrous leaves of the eucalyptus. These latter trees tell the tragedy of this country—the incessant struggle with the fevers bred by the stagnant waters. The borders of all these lakes are eaten into by pestilential marshes, and the faces of the women and children already begin to look pale and their eyes to shine with feverish bright-

ness. Here and there clumps of broom bend before the wind, and sheep graze peacefully near by. This idyllic scene, in this already dangerous atmosphere, is no doubt a specimen of what I shall see in that Magna Græcia which I am slowly but yet all too swiftly approaching. For there is not a spot in the country through which I am now passing that does not merit whole days of study. The few hours I have spent here only serve to convince me that there are prodigious treasures scattered throughout this classic land; treasures unsuspected even by those who have visited it not once, like me, but ten or twenty times. And already I begin to say to myself: When shall I return?

This Chiusi, for instance, to which I shall give only an afternoon, the ancient Clusium of King Porsenna, is it not worthy of a long sojourn? It preserves, like Volterra, its mediæval walls intermingled with Etruscan walls. Like Volterra, it possesses a museum—badly arranged, for want of intelligent direction, but containing funeral urns of great interest, as may be seen from the specimen given by M. Jules Martha, in his learned and lucid work,*

* *L'Archéologie Etrusque et Romain*, by J. Martha. (I vol., Quantin.)

and which is an exact representation of the private dwellings of the inhabitants of this country—a house of rectangular form with an opening at the top for the smoke. Chiusi has, above all, its tombs, which are more numerous than those of Volterra, and one of which, called the tomb of the Simia or Ape, contains paintings singularly well preserved. I turn my steps toward this depositary—this is the official term—under the guidance of an old man of seventy. For how many years has this guide followed his occupation of showing to strangers the profaned asylums of the dead whom he is soon to join? We must either walk across the fields or follow up hill and down dale a claycy path soaked by the recent rains. But how charming, how almost smiling, has the autumn landscape again become! Again only oaks, russet and golden, and green juniper trees laden with dark berries, are to be seen. And ever on the edge of the horizon gleam the waters of the lake of Chiusi, with that beautiful, soft, pale brightness which lakes take under a cloudy sky. On the way we meet two boys hunting robins with bird-lime. They have arranged the sticks at the edge of a thicket, and set in the ground at a little distance a stake surmounted by a sort of black ball. The

owlet, fastened to this stake, flies around it. One of the boys, lying on the ground, imitates the cries of birds, and the robins, seeing the owlet flying about and hearing the cries, approach through curiosity and allow themselves to be caught by the bird-lime. This cruel sport, which must have descended from primitive times, lends a wild poetic charm to the landscape at this hour. One can imagine a Melibæus or a Daphnis procuring in this way a precious gift for some Amaryllis or Neræa, in the days when Theocritus and Virgil transfigured in bucolics the rude village sports. The two boys, however, like true sons of a land of curiosities, immediately calculate that a hunt for tips will prove more profitable than a hunt for robins. They collect their sticks accordingly, shut their owlet in a basket, and prepare to follow the old guide as far as the tombs, ready to earn the few pennies they desire by obtruding their services on every possible occasion—guiding the traveler on a beaten path, lighting useless candle-ends that have found their way, who can tell how, into their pockets, when the guide himself holds a torch, explaining, finally, in their own way, the mural paintings, calling, for instance, angels the winged genii of the mysterious Etruscan

theology. And yet it is by a similar exercise of the imagination that so many beautiful popular legends have been elaborated.

To reach the depositary it is necessary, as at Volterra, to descend some thirty steps underground into a cavern hollowed out of the tufa and divided into four compartments. Here the bodies of the dead seem to have been interred, not incinerated and inurned, but entire and placed on a sort of couch above which the flame of the torch brings out pictures in a perfect state of preservation. Among them grins the ape which gives its name to this funeral mound. These figures, painted in red, stand out clearly against a dark background, without relief and without modeling, but with a remarkable precision of outline. They represent games, apparently those which accompanied the interment. Continuing his naïve interpretation the old guide assured me, to the intense interest of the two little bird-catchers, that it was the tomb of a family of mountebanks. The subjects treated explain how such an idea should have occurred to him. These are, in the first place, a man sitting sidewise on a horse and preparing to spring on to the croup of another horse. Then a woman leaning back on a chair, a parasol in her hand,

watching two athletes who are going to wrestle ; and finally, a young man, holding a wand before a boy for the latter to jump over, several gladiators, a chariot drawn by horses, objects, in short, which seem to us moderns the least suitable for the decoration of a tomb. Thus it was that I did not experience here that sense of mystery which I had felt in the presence of the urns of the ancient Velathri. It generally happens thus when not the myths but the ceremonies of the ancients are represented. In their concrete realism they are scarcely intelligible to us, while the human feeling which underlies their religious ideal makes it possible for us to have communion with them, in spite of the differences of creeds and customs.

I was, then, merely curious and indifferent during this visit, while I experienced the same emotion that I had felt at Volterra, and in perhaps a greater degree, on visiting, shortly after leaving the Etruscan depositary, some little Christian catacombs which extended underground in another direction. And yet the interval of time between the two epochs is not very great. Writers on the subject, indeed, place all the Etruscan frescoes between the fifth and the third centuries before our era,

while the catacombs of Chiusi are classed among those of the earliest times of Christianity. This would make a difference of only four hundred years, at the utmost, perhaps even less, between the two periods, but they are two different worlds. The entrance, now closed by a grating, is scarcely visible. Excavated in the foundations of the mountain, long corridors extend between tombs among whose disjointed stones fragments of bones are to be seen. The altar gives, on a first glance, the aspect of a church or a Roman crypt to this religious retreat. A moment since I felt nothing but curiosity; now I cannot avoid a feeling of reverential awe.

The remains which repose on either side of these galleries are occasionally marked by a Latin epitaph, but for the most part they are unnamed. But I know that they are those of men who, when living, thought about their salvation. It was to assure this salvation that they braved death by coming to assist, in defiance of the law, at the ceremonies of their faith in this holy hiding-place. It was because so many of their fellow-beings thought and felt as they did that Christianity triumphed. For each one of them contributed, in however slight a degree, to the creation of an ideal, out-

side which, even at the present day, all is darkness, doubt, and suffering. When we consider how deeply this religion has penetrated our feeling, and how strongly imbued with it, despite of itself, is our modern art, how can we fail to be moved by the thought that here are the toilers of the first hour, those in whose obscure lives the faith was perfected which, later, alone rendered possible a Dante, a Michael Angelo, a Pascal, even a Goethe—for without Christianity would Faust have existed?—a Heinrich Heine, for is not his masterpiece a mystic poem, “The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar?” This poor and deserted catacomb, then, counts for a part, infinitely small, indeed, but still a part, in this metamorphosis of the moral universe. I behold in it one of those seeds which, buried under the soil, produced later on a splendid harvest of cathedrals like that of Sienna, which I visited last week, and that of Orvieto, which I shall visit again in a few days. Under this obscure roof I feel the movement of the most prodigious germination recorded in history, which from humble beginnings attained to triumphal magnificence, and which ennobles its success by making its pomp the glorious crown of unknown piety. A moment since I thought the jests and gam-

bols of the little boys natural ; now they shock me, and my guide, rude though he be, shares this feeling ; for, one of them attempting to pull out a bone which was visible between the cracks of the stones, the old man prevented what would here have seemed a sacrilege. Obscurely, vaguely, he too feels that here lie, not only the dead, but our dead ; and he is right, for our souls, in however slight a degree, are still nourished by the souls which once animated these poor remains.

XI.

CITTÀ DELLA PIEVE, November 3.

I COULD not resist my desire to turn aside from my way to visit the little mountain city from which I date these notes, through veneration for the great painter who was born here in 1446, Pietro Vannucci, better known under another name; for instead of shedding a luster on his native city he took his famous name of Perugino from Perugia, where, it is true, his masterpieces are to be found. I have often felt the charm of the sense of intimacy, somewhat imaginary, perhaps, with some favorite artist, which springs from contact, however transient, with the scenes amid which he was born and grew up to manhood. In his earliest infancy, when the eyes of the future artist opened to the sense of form and color, this was the sky he looked at, the shade of atmosphere familiar to him, the poetry of visible beauty whose spell he felt. I remember that three years ago I visited the Alpine region in which Cadore, the birthplace of Titian, is situated. The deep and luxuriant valleys, the

blue distances, the splendor of the half southern, half Alpine landscape, all explained to me the great Venetian's vision and interpretation of nature. For nature has not changed amid the universal metamorphosis of costumes, of edifices, and of souls. Neither the outlines, sharp or softened, of the mountains, nor the violet coloring of the distant lakes, nor the types of the inhabitants have changed. I have been only a few hours in Città della Pieve, yet I have already observed that almost all the women who, their feet covered with stout shoes, walk through the old and ill-paved streets, still show in their dark eyes, their round grave faces, their close-shut serious lips, something of the Peruginesque grace—I am obliged to invent the word, for the thing itself is unique. At the inn where they serve me, according to the invariable programme of the season, fat roast thrushes black with juniper-berries, the waiter, as he sets the dishes before me, assumes an expression and a turn of the head worthy of a St. Sebastian of a fresco, and the innkeeper might serve as a model for a St. Jerome in the desert, so austere is the expression on his aged countenance, although his chief anxiety at the present moment is the sale of a cask of wine, at an exorbitant price, to a

commercial traveler who protests against the robbery.

Such a spectacle might seem somewhat disappointing if not comical, and sufficient to destroy forever the romantic illusions which we cherish regarding the old masters. This identity between the figures which they painted and the living figures subject to the most vulgar needs, does it not prove that these great artists have not put into their works the complex ideas with which we credit them? Quite simply, quite naturally, they copied the living model with careful and conscientious exactness. This is the argument of the reactionary school of critics, the "abstractors of quintessence," as we delight in calling those whom a hatred of subtilities leads to a too primitive simplicity. Reflecting a little, however, it is easy to defend, on this point, complex against simple criticism.

Doubtless the great painters saw, first and before all things, the human being, but in this being they saw the *race* and they could not discern the race without disengaging the vague ideal which struggles in it, which exists even in inferior creatures, unknown to themselves and yet consubstantial with their blood. The languor and, at the same time, the strength

of this land of mountains whose feet are bathed by the waters of fever-breeding marshes, the mysticism and the wildness of the compatriots of St. Francis of Assisi, the dreamy melancholy inspired by the contemplation of sleeping lakes, all those traits elaborated by the working of heredity through centuries, Perugino saw more clearly than anyone else, but he had only to see them. He divined them instinctively in the outline of the cheek, the color of the eye, the turn of the head. It is in this interpretation, at once humble and sympathetic, that the veritable imitation of nature consists, in which all is soul, even, and more than all, the form—a soul which reveals itself only to the soul.

Yet it seems in some sort paradoxical to use the word *soul*, speaking of this painter of Madonnas who died an unrepentant atheist. This Città della Pieve, with its broad view over the valley of the Chiana and its ruined palaces, brings him to my mind as Vasari describes him in his old age, riding back and forth between his native city and Perugia, to execute in haste some well-paid fresco. His love of money was so great that he carried about with him enormous sums, which resulted in his being plundered in one of these journeys

by robbers. He professed to have lost his faith in God and in another life ; and this infidel, who dies refusing to confess himself—an extraordinary thing for that epoch—betrays precisely in these frescoes how much there was of art in his painting. At the Duomo a Baptism of Christ and a Virgin surrounded by Saints, at Sant' Antonio a St. Anthony, with St. Peter the Hermit and St. Marcel, the remains of a Crucifixion at the Church of the Servites, are works which, executed toward the end of his life, are almost painful to contemplate, so strongly do they recall, by their manner, the fine qualities of his best years. Always the same tall figures with the large and somewhat clumsy feet set sidewise, the same chins raised to display the shape of the throat, the same drooping heads, the same ecstatic faces, the same folded hands, the same figures, in short, in the same scenes so peculiarly his. But these, instead of delighting, distress the beholder, with the single exception of the large Adoration of the Magi at Santa Maria dei Bianchi, bearing date of 1505, parts of which are charming, as, for instance, a young man holding between his finger-tips a crown which is too large for the head of the Infant Saviour, and in whose drooping figure there is so tender a languor.

And yet this fresco also betrays a certain exhaustion, the worst species of exhaustion ; not that of the hand, which is still skillful, but that of the spirit, of the heart, which can accomplish nothing more, which no longer wishes to create or to feel. It is impossible for one who is himself an artist, however insignificant and humble, not to feel a strange anguish in the presence of this survival of his genius of so great an artist. How many famous painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, have thus survived the better part of themselves! How many have become, from mercenary motives, copyists of the sublime creations of their genius which made them so deservedly famous !

A more painful problem here suggests itself, and one more difficult of solution than that of the origin of genius. What inward revolution made these elect renounce their noblest as well as their dearest ambition, for the honor of the artist and his idea of the Beautiful are rooted deep within his heart and live with its life. I was wrong, just now, to admit even a passing doubt as to the existence of a sensibility equal to his art in the great Umbrian. I am convinced, after having seen almost all his works, that he was at first

sincere, in the fullest sense of this word, so often used at the present day to signify a brutal charlatanism. He was sincere when he created his type of art. He had the profound conception of this type and the inward need of realizing it, as Virgil, whom he resembles, also had his ideal of tenderness and his need of realizing it. This cannot be copied, cannot be learned. There are touches of the brush as there are touches of style which are not a fashion of painting or of writing, but of feeling, of suffering, of loving, of praying, of living. The problem is elsewhere, in the transformation of this early sincerity into mannerism which must take place with the loss of faith. But how, and in consequence of what tragedy, did so living, so abundant a spring dry up? Yes; they are still more mysterious than genius, these gushes and these exhaustions of the inner sap, this alternate moisture and aridity of the heart, this grace, as the Doctors of the Church say, which by turns inflames and abandons us. And Perugino is only one among many examples of it. Why did Shakespeare and Racine, for instance, cease to produce, in the plenitude of their powers? Of the one it is said that he made a fortune, of the other that his vanity as an author was

wounded. These explanations explain nothing, for the author of *Phèdre* had been formerly much more severely criticised, and if Shakespeare had been only a money-hunter, with his marvelous knowledge of human nature he would have applied himself long before to more profitable work than playwriting. Nor do the poverty of Perugino's early years, and the eagerness for gain which was its consequence, explain the secret ruin which took place in his conscience, or at what moment, ceasing to believe, he adopted the resolution to lie, brush in hand, for the sake of gaining gold. Are we to believe that the execution of Savonarola, in 1498, commanded by the Pope—and what a Pope, Alexander VI.!—destroyed in the painter, who lived in Florence, the very foundations of his Christian feeling? The tragic irony, the sacrilege of this apostle, this saint, almost, being delivered to the flames by such a judge and in the name of God, was a trying ordeal for the conscience of the end of the fifteenth century. Was heaven then empty, that so monstrous a crime should be permitted? Was there, then, no longer a heavenly Father, and had Christ died in vain? I hear this cry issue from the lips of those who witnessed this shameful, this terrible spectacle :

“If these things be so, why believe in another world? Let us make money and still more money. There is nothing real but the joys of the flesh!” It was in following these counsels of a degrading materialism that the latter years of Perugino were spent, of him who has best portrayed the purity of holy Virgins, the tender nostalgia of Saints enamored of the Celestial Country, their motionless ecstasy and their silent aspirations toward the heavenly life. What hidden depths may there not be in the heart of a great artist, a being so far apart from other men that, whatever the malignity of scientific criticism may affirm, we must say of him, if we would be just, what an admirable writer, who in the end suffered defeat, said of himself: “Do not ask me where my strength lies; ask me rather in how many places I am vulnerable.”

XII.

ORVIETO, November 4.

THE disturbing problems as to Perugino's sincerity which I proposed to myself for solution yesterday can arise only in case of an artist who, like him, sought and attained a mastery of pathos. It is the price he has to pay for the dangerous spell he wields. It would seem as if this class of geniuses, feminine rather than masculine, awaken in their adorers the same extremes of feeling as does love, rapture alternating with the tortures of doubt.

. . . . Tous les etres aimés
Sont des vases de fiel qu'on boit less yeux fermés.*

These lines, so singularly touching, are not, however, altogether true. Sometimes we open our eyes and push away the cup—only to take it up again, however. In the same way the works which we like best are assuredly those

* Those we love
Are cups of gall that we drink with our eyes shut.

whose merits we most often call in question. We like them too well not to dislike them at times, not to put them away from us—only to take them up again. They are not of a purely intellectual order, and to be convinced of this it is sufficient to compare them with works which we admire without liking them, which arouse our enthusiasm without touching us, which speak to our intellect rather than to our heart. Compare Virgil and Lucretius, Heine and Goethe, Racine and Corneille, Lamartine and Victor Hugo. There has always been, in every order of intellectual production, a complete antithesis between the artist whose distinguishing characteristic is grace and the artist whose distinguishing characteristic is strength. This contrast never appeared to me more striking than on leaving, as I have just done, Città della Pieve for Orvieto and Perugino for Signorelli, that other great master with whom I renewed my acquaintance at Volterra and Monte Oliveto. What are paintings on wood, what are the frescoes of the old convent, even, when we compare them with the wonderful chapel of the Duomo here, on the walls of which he has painted the End of the World, the Antichrist, the Resurrection, Hell and Paradise, with a vigor of touch which Michael

Angelo studied before beginning his work on the Sistine Chapel and which he has not surpassed?

I had not been in this city since 1874, when I visited it in company with my friend Albert Cahen, the musician—a far away time when only to be in Italy, to know that I was there, was almost a pain, so intense was my worship of Art and Beauty. I had retained a recollection of a picturesque approach to Orvieto which I did not find. It is to be adverted that at that time the ancient papal city perched upon its height was reached by a zigzag path replaced now by a rope railway. The path was very slow and the railway is very rapid. Therefore it is only vaguely that I regret the former manner of reaching the city and I try to console myself for my semi-disappointment by turning my back to the machinist and gazing at the broad valley below, where the Paglia winds among clumps of trees still dyed with the gold of autumn, still veiled by mists. All this is in harmony with the inevitable feeling of melancholy which one experiences on revisiting a spot which one has visited in youth, and it is in harmony, also, with the river that flows so gently, like that Chiana which it receives almost under my eyes and whose slow course

furnished Dante with this strange comparison : *

Quanto di là dal muover della Chiana
Si muove'l ciel. . . .

—*Par. xiii*, 23.

When I descended from the wagonette which made this ascent of more than a hundred yards in a quarter of an hour, I experienced a fresh disappointment in finding a city altogether different from the neighboring Tuscan cities. Here tortuous streets running between hovels take the place of flagged avenues bordered by palaces. Only a few scattered buildings show a remnant of feudalism. In the province I have just left every city has its own manner of life, its own individuality. Here, on the contrary, begin the Roman States, the land of subjection, of a government descended from on high. The spontaneity of local life was here less strong; the vitality of Art had become almost exhausted; or rather it was all condensed in the Duomo. The city has for its *raison d'être* only this sacred blazon, this species of missal illustration wrought in stone, for to what but a gigantic miniature—if we may associate two so dissimilar words—can

* More quickly move the heavens than the waters of the Chiana.

we compare this marble façade, variegated with mosaics, enriched with columns with gilded fringes, adorned with bas-reliefs in which the fervid piety of the Middle Ages mingles with the powerful animalism of the Renaissance. An angel, an ox, an eagle, and a lion, all four in bronze, stand out in somber relief on this glittering façade. In the center smiles a marble Virgin protected by angels, and above this Madonna, so youthful and yet so grave, spreads a rosette, a gem in filigree, surrounded by a border as delicately wrought as the lace which I saw the peasant women of the Riviera at Genoa last month weaving on their cretonne tambours at the doors of their neat houses. Suddenly a ray of sunshine breaks through the clouds and strikes the façade of the cathedral, making it throw back metallic gleams. Notwithstanding its elaborate ornamentation the whole façade now stands out distinct, grandiose, supernatural, terrible. It no longer seems like a gigantic *bibelot*, like the front of Santa Maria dei Fiori at Florence. The black and white of the body of the building do not, like that, resemble a checker board. Is this owing to the juster proportions of the parts? Is it due to its solitary situation? Is it because of the height at which it stands, the horizon it faces?

I experienced here that mysterious thrill which one still feels, however little of Christianity may remain in the heart, at sight of the cathedrals of Northern Europe, those *Münster*, the creation of reverie and prayer. Perhaps, too, the autumn mist which floated around this Duomo of Orvieto gave it something of a northern aspect. The sun's rays had flashed upon it for an instant, clothing it with a robe of glittering light. Then the sky was again veiled in clouds and a mist fell, heavy and cold, and the marble giant seemed, in very truth, the brother of those other giants that had so stirred my enthusiasm at Basle, Cologne, and Strasbourg, on the banks of that Rhine which in spite of treaties will always remain half French, that Rhine, with whose turbid flood is associated the best poetry of the West.

As I had retained no distinct recollection of the decoration of the interior of the church, I had feared to find it a contrast to the exterior of the building. I had feared to find there that profusion of ornamentation which is adverse to every feeling of true devotion. But no. The vast empty nave stretches before me, black and white, as if in mourning. Before each of the columns stands on a pedestal a colossal marble figure of an Apostle. This council of twelve

statues is illuminated by a light which is sepulchral owing to the almost opaque material used instead of glass in the high ogive windows, glazed only in their upper portion. It is All Souls' week and the priests, ranged around a tomb covered by a stone without ornamentation, intone a funeral hymn for the repose of the souls of the former canons interred there. The bishop, in cope and miter, leads. Other priests respond from the choir where they are seated. In the middle of the church stands an empty catafalque with menacing inscriptions in Latin : "To-day is mine, to-morrow thine." "All is vanity." "Thus passeth the glory of the world." Anywhere else the triteness of these phrases would make one smile. Under this vaulted roof, in this obscurity, and listening to these chants, their truth sends a thrill through one. The dumb phantoms of the marble Apostles look like a tribunal of implacable judges. They seem about to move, to speak, to condemn. Alas ! They it is who have been condemned, if I am to believe the sacristan, who has constituted himself my guide, and who labors, as is meet, to destroy my emotion by his commentaries. He tells me that the commission appointed for the supervision of the national monuments propose to restore this

Duomo after the plan of its original primitive style. Oh! the barbarity of archæologists, who cannot understand that this species of irregular growths added in process of time to the original building gives it the charm of a living being. Men have walked through it since the architect built the church. They have prayed in it. They have touched it with pious hands. A part of their life has left its traces there. I can never be made to believe that this church will be more in accord with the intention with which it was built when these traces shall have been effaced. What is called a restoration is but an introduction of the coldness of dead science where life once palpitated—a life complex, incoherent, and overladen—but still life. Will a time ever come when we shall admit the profound truth conveyed in Goethe's sarcastic saying: "The spirit of history is the spirit of these gentlemen?" If so, modern painters will be interdicted from restoring paintings and frescoes as they have done in the Campo Santo of Pisa, to the irreparable injury of Orcagna and Gozzoli. The old paintings of these noble masters are now horrible shining daubs. Archæologists will be prevented from restoring ruins. To preserve the monuments of art and of history as

they come down to us—this is our whole duty, not to attempt arbitrary and fatal restorations, for to restore is always to ruin.

Fortunately this destructive restoration seems to have spared thus far the celebrated Capella Nuova which contains the frescoes of Signorelli. This tragic painter was called here, in 1499, to continue a painting of the Last Judgment, begun—what an antithesis in the juxtaposition of these two names—by the gentle Fra Angelico. The fervent touch of the latter and his chaste idea of pious beatitude are recognizable in the ceiling above the altar. There a Christ is sitting in judgment among the angels. In judgment? No; he pardons, he blesses, and assuredly this loving Saviour knows nothing of the sinister scene in which Luca makes him preside. The rapture of this indulgent God who redeems the sins of the world comes from within. No; he has not commanded the atrocious punishments represented on the spacious wall below. Never have the two aspects of the religious ideal—that of infinite mercy and that of implacable justice—been contrasted as they are on this ceiling and on this wall. On the latter Signorelli has treated with his mastery of anatomy the two most terrible episodes of Christianity—the

Resurrection of the Dead and the Last Judgment. In the first of these two frescoes, by a stroke of genius, he has painted these poor dead issuing from the ground itself, not from graves. They have mingled, in the course of centuries, in fact, with this life-supporting and devouring earth which sustains us all, to which we must all return. Their flesh has been buried in it, has dissolved in and commingled with it. Behold it, by the miracle of the last day, recreated, remolded from the common clay from which God made Adam. He has dared, this visionary artist, with a vigor of imagination equal to that of Dant , to depict skeletons in the act of reclothing themselves with this body recovered from the clay. Some among these dead recognize each other. A man throws his arm tenderly and protectingly around a young woman, while another man catches hold of the former in order not to be alone on this terrible day. The group of these three creatures betrays a touch of human pity, of merciful tenderness in the cruel painter. It is like the episode of Francesca among the horrors of the *Divina Commedia*, and by the force of contrast this gleam of pitying tenderness touches us all the more. It touches us but it does not touch the angels, who do not

look at these unhappy creatures, wholly occupied as they are in sounding the last trump furiously through the sky, in which the stars look like black points, while the streamers which adorn the colossal trumpets lash the firmament in terror, convulsively.

Perhaps this tragic scene is even yet more pathetic than the fresco which forms a pendant to it and which represents, under the name of "Judgment," a savage possessed by demons in the act of biting, tearing, and crushing the damned whom three beautiful archangels in armor, peaceful knights of God, are casting out of heaven. The changeless nightmare of this hell reaches the extreme limit of terror which it is possible for the nerves to bear. It is a wild confusion of naked bodies which writhe under the hooks and claws, in the embrace and under the hoofs of the greenish demons, drunk with this ferocious feast of human suffering. There is not a breathing space, not an interstice through which the air can penetrate, between these hundreds of bodies thus intertwined, knotted, bound together, with faces of agonized despair, with muscles that strain themselves to strangle their prey, with nails buried in the jaws they are tearing, and on this infernal bed bodies rain in attitudes of

prodigious foreshortening. A demon flies fiercely past, bearing on his broad wings a woman mad with terror, of whom the sacristan relates that she was the faithless mistress of Luca, who put her here to revenge himself upon her. If I did not know how little value is to be attached to these tales, of which the imaginative Italian beadles are so prodigal, I should like to fancy that this last incident was true, partly for the humor of it and also to find a trait of ordinary humanity in this genius of almost superhuman tragic vigor.

The Preaching of the Antichrist and Paradise, which face the former scenes, are also frescoes of great beauty. Of great beauty, too, are the paintings which decorate the lower part of the walls, the ceiling, the spaces above the doors and the sides of the altar. But the Resurrection and the Hell dominate me and hold me enthralled. I can look at nothing else. I feel that I am in the presence of two masterpieces of *realism*; that is to say, that art that leaves nothing to the imagination and which reproduces the object without idealizing it. The painter imagined a combat between demons and men. This image he has interpreted with the vividness of a fever dream by bodies whose every attitude, every fiber, every quiver, he has beheld.

He has copied this spectacle without infusing into it the faintest touch of personal feeling. His soul is not there nor his heart, but only his eye and his hand. It does not move us like one of Perugino's frescoes, but a character of indisputable reality emanates from the work. There is no longer any need to inquire whether the man was sincere or not, what were the relations between his genius and his life, what moral crisis he passed through. The object is there, like something which exists in itself and by itself. It is the watch that goes by itself, wherever it may come from, and concerning the watchmaker there is no occasion to ask any questions. You have before you a concrete and positive reality. You can no more doubt it than you can doubt the pillars of the grand cathedral which stand beside it, solid, massive, immovable. Only, everything must be paid for, as Bonaparte was accustomed to say, and this art, whose execution is so skillful, so conscientious, and so concise, is wanting in charm. This word, so vague in its signification, has been hackneyed by use, but it is the only one which expresses the magic of certain other works, shadowy, incomplete, of a style almost weak compared with the works of a Signorelli; of a softness

bordering on mannerism, but by which one feels one's self loved as by a person, and which one loves in the same way. There are two classes of artists who have always shared between them the dominion of the world : those who depict objects, effacing themselves altogether ; and those whose works serve chiefly as a pretext to lay bare their own hearts. It is in vain that I admire the former with my whole strength and tell myself that they will never deceive me, while the sincerity of the others is often doubtful and they may always be suspected of posing—my sympathies go with the latter, it is with them I like to be, and with the impression of Luca's learned works still fresh on my mind, I rejoice to know that I should forget them all to-morrow, in the beloved halls of the museum richest in works of sentiment in the world, that of Perugia.

XIII.

PERUGIA, November 6.

I HAD the misfortune to travel in the evening and in rainy weather from Orvieto to Perugia on a road skirting the vast lake of Thrasymene. I had retained in my memory, from previous visits, a delightful picture of the blue waters of the lake, resting, as in a cup, among the wild mountains surrounding it. And I had the still greater misfortune to reach Perugia just after dark, so that I missed on this occasion the keen impressions of the three-quarters of an hour's ascent which it is necessary to make to reach the old city that, spread out on a number of hills, like Rome, built almost on the bank of the Tiber, like Rome, justifies by its aspect alone the angry words of Paul III., stigmatizing "*l'Audacia dei Perugini*." It is, in fact, a rude city, a wild mountain town with tall dark stone houses, an eagle's nest menacing the vast horizon where sleep Assisi, Foligno, and Spoleto. An icy wind blows here unceasingly, whistling through arches which, like the Arch of Augus-

tus, were erected in the time of the Etruscan rule, and the piercing north wind sweeps through the streets, narrow as corridors. But contrariwise to the other towns which I visited during the last fortnight, it is not over a capital fallen into decay that the winter wind disperses the effluvia of the Apennines. Here all the activity of modern life surges in the public places. The University, with its excellent School of Medicine, its numerous garrison, and the presence of a body of magistrates make it an influential center and a sort of capital of the composite country which lies between Florence, Rome, and the Marches. The Corso Vannucci, when I alighted there on the day after my arrival, filled as it was with venders selling in the open air, bordered with proud and well-kept palaces, and with the magnificent fountain of the square of the Duomo at its extremity, showed in truth no symptom of decay. The earthen and bronze utensils, the harnesses of the horses, plated with copper and curiously ornamented in red, the many colored woolen stuffs, the yellow, green, or brown pottery, of antique forms, are there displayed as if to attest the perpetuity of custom. Are not these same decorations met with also in the decorations which were familiar

to the old painters? From the costumes of the citizens whom I passed in the streets I might have fancied myself in the times when the inhabitants of this town hung up with great pomp, between the emblematic lion and griffin on the façade of their Town Hall, the colossal chains and bolts taken at Sienna. These spoils of victory are still there, ornamenting, by their glorious souvenir, the square of the Duomo, which is also adorned by the little palace of the archbishop, close beside the vast fountain, with its innumerable statues sculptured by the two Pisanos. This is the dwelling where the present Pope—that Leo XIII. whose wrinkled, ascetic face is softened by so fine a smile—spent so many years governing with admirable sanctity his extensive diocese, visiting his poor, and resting from his evangelical labors by composing long and learnedly constructed Latin poems. In the depths of the magnificent prison which the Vatican is to-day, it is said that the pontiff, when recalling the past events of his long life, dwells with peculiar pleasure on the recollection of Perugia, that fortress girdled by churches and convents, with so many outlooks into space. And in those churches and those convents, and in the halls of the public

palace, now converted into a museum, what pictures!

It is to see these pictures that I have come here, but it is not possible here, as in other cities, to choose two or three to devote one's self exclusively to and make friends of. They are all too much alike, too closely resemble one another by community of ideal and almost by identity of treatment. The most perfect are undoubtedly those which Perugino, the chief of the choir, executed for the Cambio, the stock exchange of the time. I fancy that the merchants of Perugia of that period were hardly more capable than are those of the present day of appreciating the profound intention of an artist. Apparently they gave their orders, just as do those of to-day, to the talent quoted at the highest figure as being the most profitable investment. Those were happier times, and they chose well in directing themselves to the first of the Umbrian masters. Accustomed to paint religious pictures chiefly, Vannucci did not change his style for the stockbrokers. He decorated the walls destined to listen to debates concerning business transactions with a Transfiguration and a Nativity. On the ceiling he has represented, mingling together, according to the

spirit of the Renaissance, souvenirs of classic mythology and images altogether Christian. The deities who preside over the planets, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Venus, Mercury, appear there with their attributes; and on the side walls the Virtues, represented by a series of legendary heroes, face the Prophets and the Sibyls. A visit to this curious hall at midday, when the sun, entering through the window, illumines its too generally obscure recesses, is the best preparation for the study of the Museum, where are collected frescoes, canvases, and panels taken from churches and convents. But none of those paintings gives, like the paintings of the Cambio, the very genius of Umbrian Art, which resides—as I have already tried to demonstrate, in speaking of the frescoes of Il Pinturicchio at Sienna—in the absolute isolation from one another of the persons represented.

Seat yourself on the carved wooden bench occupied by the stockjobbers of the fifteenth century and fix your attention on the wall before you. This spirit of isolation envelopes you gradually, like an atmosphere. The heroes chosen to symbolize Prudence, Justice, Valor, and Temperance—and how strange a choice they are: Camillus, Pittacus, Trajan, Leonidas,

Pericles, Scipio!—stand immovable, dressed in costumes half antique, half mediæval, and as much strangers to each other as they are to the spectator. It is impossible to know what they are looking at. Some secret thought absorbs them—a thought that is reflected on brows so beautiful and that diffuses itself, so to say, over countenances of such adorable grace! Uplifted as they are, by their inner vision, above our world, these heroes show in no way the emaciation of the Christs and Martyrs represented by the primitive German painters. Their powerful arms, their broad shoulders, the firmness of the muscles of their necks, show, on the contrary, that they are truly of that land of which Alfieri has said that the human plant grows there stronger than elsewhere. Leonidas, for instance, who raises his hip slightly as he replaces his sword in its sheath of soft leather, Sicinius and Horatius Cocles, who stand beside him, fearlessly resting on their bucklers, are admirable specimens of the warrior sound in health and full of physical vigor. It is in their glance only, and in the contours of their faces, that the mystic spirit reveals itself. They have at the same time the frames of athletes and the expression one would suppose monks nourished on the Imita-

tion might wear—a contrast explained perfectly by the unique period at which their spiritual father conceived them. This is also the secret of the spell they exercise over us. At the end of the fifteenth century the flower of mystic reverie, that had sprung into bloom during the long dreary period of the Middle Ages, had not yet withered before the breath of reviving paganism. The taste for plastic splendor was sufficiently developed, however, for Raphael to be near. This twofold and contradictory ideal, that of a monastic ecstasy won from the mortification of the senses and that of a beauty which appeals to the senses, seems to have coexisted in Perugino and in the painters who preceded or accompanied him, especially in Benedetto Bonfigli, Eusebio da San Giorgio, Giannicola Manni, and a few others whose works are in the Pinacotheca of Perugia. This complex dream has its symbol in the Angels of Bonfigli, crowned with roses, like the impious of whom the Scriptures speak: "Let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither;" or like the guests of the pagan banquets: "Let us inhale the perfume of the roses while they look like thy cheeks. Let me kiss thy cheeks while they resemble thy roses." But these poor angels with flower-crowned locks hold in their

hands the instruments of the Saviour's passion, and a dolorous pity dims their soft eyes from which large tears well.

I think I can discover in this antithesis the reason why the Umbrian painters touch the heart so profoundly. It is very possible, it may here be said, that they hardly suspected, when they were adorning with religious images the walls of their convents, that they would one day be admired by the children of the most positive of ages. But did the unknown ascetic who wrote the *Imitation* on the wooden desk of his cell suspect that passionate admirers of *Adolphe*, of *Liaisons Dangereuses*, and *Rouge et Noir* would find his pious manual as interesting a companion for their sleepless hours as the other three? In every work of art, whether it be a picture or a book, a statue or a piece of music, there is a hidden principle of life, that is to say, a secret virtuality unsuspected by the creator of the work. Have you ever seen a ropemaker at his work, walking backward without looking where he is going? We are all, great and small, working like him, half consciously, half blindly, and above all we do not know what purpose our work will serve when it is finished. For life, in a work of art, as everywhere in nature, proceeds by an imperceptible

and uninterrupted process. However paradoxical the assertion may appear, it may be affirmed that a book, for instance, is not entirely the same a hundred years after it has been written. The words are unchanged, but do they preserve exactly the same signification? What reader of intellectual tastes does not understand that for a man of the seventeenth century Racine's poetry was not what it has become for us? It will be answered: The work is the same, the change has taken place in yourself. This is a plausible explanation, but it will not bear analysis. It seems, in fact, as if we added something to the work by our manner of interpreting it in accordance with our own spiritual needs. In reality, what we seem to add to it, it suggests to us. It had this possibility in it. The proof of this is that some only, not all of the works of past times have retained this power. Why are the tragedies of Voltaire dead for us, and not those of Racine? Why the paintings of the Carracci and not those of the early masters? Why the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and not *Manon Lescaut*? I take the most diverse examples designedly and I venture to draw the conclusion, in opposition to abstract scientific criticism—in which, for a long time past, I have ceased to

have any faith—that in the case of works which have remained truly living our modern sentiment has the right to make itself heard, however it may differ from the conscious intention of the authors of those works.

Thus it is that the Umbrian school of art is found to respond to shades of romantic feeling far distant from the thoughts which nourished the artists of the fifteenth century. In the Madonnas of Bonfigli, in the Sebastians of Giannicola, in the Martyrs of Eusebio da San Giorgio, in the knights of chivalry of Vannucci we feel the charm of a melancholy mysticism, repressed, and yet almost sensual. The contrast I have pointed out, between their bodies and their souls, does not give us merely the impression of this quality of the human being, always so elusive. We perceive in them the weight of an overmastering thought, like the presence of a vision sent from on high. This vision has not even had its source in those beings, so that it weighs them down like a too difficult mission. It makes them suffer from secret conflicts, which they foresee even when they do not experience them. They are youths of antiquity brought up in a cloister. They have profound faith and a superabundance of physical vitality. The culpable life of

the senses proceeds side by side, in the unconscious depths of their being, with the innocent life of the spirit. Nature in them will be as strong as grace. Their piety verges on passion, their ecstasy will end in a temptation. That which is to be the insolvable problem of the modern human heart is being prepared in them—the struggle between the Christian needs inherited from the Middle Ages and the appetites of ancient paganism set free by the Renaissance. That which Musset called the malady of the age, and which is only the crisis of this struggle, lies in the germ, as it were, in those characters whom the complexity of their nature renders vacillating—those beautiful Hamlets as yet guiltless. I remember the surprise mingled with emotion which I experienced on my first visit to their sanctuary, that palace of Perugia in which their *coterie* is assembled, to remark that certain refinements of our modern art are almost anticipated in them. What particularly surprised me was to observe a touching similarity between their poetry and that of my favorite poems. Besides, the moral elements, whose combinations produce the infinite diversity of human souls, are very few, and very few also the classes into which those souls can be divided. Always, at intervals more or

less far apart, certain forms of art reappear, expressing the same maladies of the heart, the same disquiet, the pursuit of the same ideal. The influence of historical prejudices has blinded the æsthetes of the present day to this truth. They have been too much afraid to attribute to painters a "literary" intention, to use a formula which seems profound but which, after all, probably means absolutely nothing, according to the manner of simply negative formulas. Is the purpose of literature, then—I mean literature which is worthy of the name—different from that of the other arts—music and architecture, sculpture and painting? Like them, and in a language of its own, what does it express but shades of human feeling? But whether it be interpreted by written words, or by musical sounds, by carved stones, by lines, or by colors, this feeling is the same. The all-important question—beyond talent, beyond technical skill—is always and everywhere to have soul. It is because the painters of the Umbrian school had so much soul that their works seem to us so new, so fresh, after so many years. I have essayed to tell in what manner, without pretending to record anything but a purely personal impres-

sion ; and I now hasten to conclude these notes, so that I may return to the communal palace and rejoice my eyes once more, before resuming my journey, by the sight of those divine pictures.

XIV.

ASSISI, November 10.

I SPENT several days at Perugia, detained there by the bad weather, in an English hotel filled with English guests. With the fog rising from the valley and the fierce gusts of rain beating against the windows I could fancy myself back again in some secluded spot in the great island, one of those Border towns, like Carlisle or Keswick, which are so favorable to study and to serious meditation. And, indeed, the bookcase in this hotel is full of *diaries* of all sorts written by Englishmen, and Englishwomen, giving descriptions of the smallest towns, not of Tuscany and Umbria only, but of the Marches, of Puglia, and Otranto, where I shall be next week. It is easy enough, in truth, to joke about this species of literature, made up largely of naïve personal anecdotes, and characterized also by a certain childish humor of which one soon tires. This latter manifests itself in a ceaseless ridicule of the waiters, the drivers, the *cicerone*, and even the tormenting insects discreetly abused

by modest Misses under the abstract and decorous title of Italian carelessness. All the prejudices inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race are also to be met with in this literature, notably the Protestant revolt against Catholicism, and a hatred of the religion of the South, of that worship which the imagination aids the conscience to adorn with visible poetry. On the other hand, what an amount of individual industry do these books imply! The genius for minuteness of detail, the passion for culture manifest in them are admirable; as is also an intellectual admiration for Italy, the evident fascination which this land of the sun exercises over travelers from a land of fogs. An important part of English poetry can be explained only by this Italian influence observable in Byron, Shelley, Keats, the two Brownings, and later, in the delightful female writer to whom we owe "An Italian Garden." Reading these poets, some of whose works I found among the many diaries of travel, and meditating on the soulful pictures of the Umbrian Museum, and the Italianism of those beautiful productions of the North, I waited for the sky to clear sufficiently for the pilgrimage to Assisi, not so much to avoid physical discomfort—one becomes quickly accustomed to this

after a few weeks' travel—as because the town of St. Francis should not be approached except when certain lights prevail. A sort of idyllic clearness of atmosphere should surround it, so truly is the image of the great saint, who preached to the birds and the fishes among the flowers, associated with all that is serene in nature.

I had at last this morning the delight of seeing the sky swept of its clouds, and I set out for the hill on which stands one of the capitals of Spiritual Life, on a day worthy of its legend. The sky, of a pale blue that announced the near approach of winter, was reflected in the pools which the heavy rains of the past week had left everywhere. The storm had given the fields a first death blow, as it were, and the yellow leaves strewn the gleaming surface of the pools. The olive trees, only, with their ideally delicate foliage, had not changed their coloring ; but who does not know that this almost gray foliage has not the hue of living vegetation. The snowy Apennines glittered in the distance, and in the gorges white clouds had gathered. The morning was bright, calm, and melancholy, real pilgrimage weather, and I held in my hand, as we passed the Tiber, whose famous waters flow through this val-

ley, the biography of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure given to me by the venerable guardian of Monte Oliveto. I read the pious stories related of him; how the saint finally overcame the severity with which his father had at first treated him; and how, while riding, when a young man, on this plain he met a leper, who was Jesus Christ himself—in the words of the old popular song:

Le pauvre dont ils se moquent
C'est Jésus Christ déguisé!*

I read how he retired into the wilderness to found there three churches and the Order of Minor Brothers, and how he visited Pope Innocent III., so able a statesman notwithstanding his candid and simple nature. Among the stories relating the miracles of the saint I read with most pleasure those which treat of his relations with inanimate objects and with animals, as, for instance, when addressing the fire by which he was to be cauterized previous to a surgical operation, he says; “Oh fire, *my brother*, God has created thee pure, beautiful, and useful, be propitious and beneficent to me now!” In the course of this naïve

* The beggar whom they mock
Is Jesus Christ disguised!

work many other instances occur of beings whom, in the simplicity of his nature, Francis of Assisi addressed by the tender name of brother—from the lamb brought to him at Rome, which he gave to the noble lady, Giacoma Settesoli, and which awakened its lazy mistress butting her with its little horns, and which bleated to make her go to mass—to the pike given to him on Lake Thrasymentis and which the saint put back into the water. “This fish,” adds St. Bonaventure, “followed the boat which contained his savior, as if transported with love and happiness, nor would he leave it until he received the blessing of the holy man and was dismissed by him.” Some birds near Venice, a grasshopper on a tree near Santa Maria degli Angeli, a pheasant near Sienna, a falcon on the Subasio, some wolves on the same mountain—such were the strange friends of the apostle of Assisi. One closes the little volume without desiring to discuss the greater or less degree of authenticity of the anecdotes it relates. What do they signify, in fact, but that a moral personality revealed itself here—seven hundred years ago—endowed with so sovereign a grace, so intense a piety, so ineffable a gentleness that it was impossible but that the very animals should acknowledge their

spell? And then, certain profound sayings of St. Francis have been transmitted to us which, alone, suffice to bring the whole man before us, as this to his disciples: "When you are traveling you should be as humble and modest as when in your hermitage or your cell. For wherever we may go, we still have our cell with us. *Our brother, the body, is our cell, and the soul is the hermit who dwells in it*, in order to meditate on God and to adore him. If a religious soul does not dwell in peace in the cell of the body, exterior cells will avail him little." If he had left us nothing but these words we should still feel him to be a man who had a genius for the mystic life, as da Vinci had a genius for form and Balzac a genius for the social life. The supreme gift reveals itself in them, as it does wherever it is met with, by the master virtue, unerring clearness of vision.

I asked myself the other day, when looking at the paintings of Perugino and Bonfigli, why it was that certain works of art remain so fresh and vigorous when the conditions under which they were created have all changed. The same question, more difficult of solution in the latter case, presents itself with regard to certain characters in history who have a fascination for minds totally different from theirs and often

even hostile to the principle of which they were the exponents. St. Francis of Assisi is one of these. No man was more devoid than he of that faculty on which modern society chiefly prides itself, that observing and critical instinct which sees in everything the principles of a science and which seeks at the present day to reduce the religious problem to a grammatical analysis by the philological study of the Scriptures. No saint has continued to be, however, I will not say, more popular, but more venerated by men proud of their intellect, men like Renan, whose fame is based chiefly on his pitiless analysis of the mystic doctrine on which the monk was nourished. And this not through one of those tricks of dilettantism of which the great genius who wrote *Questions d'Histoire Religieuse* is too prone. Every contemporary writer who has mentioned St. Francis has spoken of him in the same terms as Renan. The reason of this appears to be that the saint of Assisi, setting aside the miracles related of him, and even in these miracles, shows himself to have practiced, in the highest degree, the two virtues which are the very essence of the religious sentiment—submission and renunciation. Goethe, whose hatred of the Middle Ages was so determined that when

he visited the town of Assisi he cared to see nothing there but the insignificant ruins of a temple of Minerva, as a discipline, doubtless, and in order to devote himself exclusively to the antique world--the pagan Goethe has made, in Wilhelm Meister, this profound observation: "All religions have the same end--to make man accept the inevitable." He says *accept*, not *endure*. To accept implies a love for this inevitable; a feeling, not an idea merely, that this incomprehensible universe has a mysterious and beneficent meaning. It is in vain that we weave sophisms to destroy the belief in a human solution of the great problem; that we exercise our ingenuity to prove to ourselves that the true rôle of man is passive resignation, in the presence of a nature which is blind and deaf; that we ridicule, delicately or brutally, as the case may be, the pretensions of our poor individuality in the vast cosmos; this attitude is only an affectation, and the soul within us protests, when we are sincere, against this proud and factitious tension of our will. The need exists, will ever exist, in our inmost nature, to find in this world that which shall satisfy our hearts, since our hearts are of this world; and men, absolutely inoffensive and pure, like the *Poverelle* of Umbria who believed in the benefi-

cence of the universe, as naturally as they breathed, as they lived—with their whole souls—rise before us in unanswerable protest against the doctrine of negation, which is stifling us. They become the accomplices of the unconscious faith within us, which seeks itself, at times with tears. The pleasure with which we regard their moral silhouette after this lapse of time shows a longing to believe which is in itself a belief. “You would not seek me,” says the Saviour, in the admirable Mystery of Jesus, “if you had not already found me.” Neither the doctrines of these believers nor their prejudices concern us any longer; it is their *I*—like ours in its secret needs, but which possessed what we so greatly desire—yes, it is this pious and heroic I which kindles our fervor from the depths of the impenetrable abyss into which it has returned. Is there so great a difference between this phenomenon and that other phenomenon so mysterious, so little understood by the imperfect psychology of the present day, which true believers call prayer?

It is a question, on the other hand, whether a visit to the country of these men be not productive only of disenchantment, or at least of melancholy. Feeling their living presence around us, within us, it saddens us to see that

their labors have left so inadequate a result in the external world; that the visible work on which they have stamped their genius has almost failed of its purpose. For my own part I experienced again the shock which I had before felt on entering the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, on the outskirts of the town of Assisi, which yet contains the chapel of the Portiuncula, founded by the saint himself. At a first glance this primitive chapel looks positively mean. And, then, the monks of the Order, intrusted with the care of these pious relics—poor religious, utterly without education, and a little mercenary—scarcely correspond to the ideal the gentle Francis must have formed to himself of his Order. Finally and chiefly, nothing has remained in this church which gives a true impression of the man whose presence once pervaded it. A detestable fresco of Overbeck, which shows all the falseness of the art of his school—for is not an affectation of simplicity the worst species of pedantry?—another fresco of Perugino outrageously retouched, paintings, almost entirely defaced, by Tiberio of Assisi and Spagna, these are the principal works of art that decorate this sanctuary. The guide showed me, indeed, the garden of rose-bushes without thorns whose leaves, the legend

says, still bear the traces of the blood of St. Francis, who rolled himself among them on a certain occasion to overcome a temptation. But it was late in the season, and no young flower face smiled upon me from out the bush. Depressed by the drear and wintry melancholy of the scene I reached the great convent where I desired to see the celebrated frescoes of Giotto, and the sight of the convent still further increased this feeling. On its massive foundations of masonry its two super-added churches still stand, but it has ceased to belong to the Order of the saint, so that, notwithstanding their admirable pictures, the chapels give an irresistible impression of ruin and abandonment. A mass was being celebrated, but it chanced to be attended only by a few poor women of the people and some mendicants, while a great number of tourists, attracted like myself, by the beauty of the day, walked about, Baedeker or Joanne in hand, seeing only an object of curiosity in the vaulted roof on which the painter who was the friend of Dante has glorified the vows of the Order of the Franciscans—Poverty, Chastity, Obedience. The saint himself, surrounded by a halo, and attended by seraphim, appears, borne up to heaven on a throne, clothed in a robe of

splendor and holding the cross and the book in his hands, which bear the mark of the *stigmata*, his eyes, like those of a Byzantine icon, gazing upward in ecstatic vision. Ah ! let him not turn his gaze toward the vast nave, deserted now—he whose faith in his work was so firm. Let not doubt assail him because of the threatened caducity of the noblest of human undertakings. Let him not be troubled, as I have just been, by the contrast between the peaceful landscape of the sacred idyl, a real scene of the Friday saint of Parsifal which has remained unchanged, and the little town so greatly changed. Its houses and its streets are indeed the same but the churches are falling into decay, the Duomo is crumbling away, the pilgrims have been replaced by mendicants who follow the tourists ; and of these tourists, how few know what the hero of divine love really was who was born and died on this hill, where the pitiless hand of time has not touched the face of the land, at least—that face which, as an ancient writer has sadly said, does not change so quickly as the heart of man.

XV.

ANCONA, November 13.

THE road from Assisi to Ancona winds among mountains, passing at times through marvelous gorges which make it almost rival the road, so beautiful and so little known, between Florence and Bologna. A little before reaching the old town of the famous quadrilateral the road passes Jesi, where, in 1194, the Emperor Frederick II. was born, his mother, Constance of Aragon, being then on her way to join Henry VI. in his kingdom of Sicily. The unusual circumstance of a prince's birth taking place in so remote a spot was the occasion of Frederick's enemies casting a doubt upon his legitimacy, later, and the violent Jean de Brienne, his father-in-law, went so far as to address him, in a dispute recorded by Salimbeni, which gives a just idea of the rudeness of the times, as, "Evil demon, son of a butcher of Jesi!" With my thoughts still full of the *Poverello* of Assisi how was it possible to avoid being struck by the contrast between the two men? I thought of the strange irony

of fate which had caused the least Christian of the princes of the Middle Ages, the bitter enemy of the popes, the half-Mohammedan Cæsar who never believed in anything but astrologers, his Imperial rights, and the scimitars of his Arabs of Lucera, to be born here, a few leagues distant from the spot and almost in the very year in which the saint founded his Order. This contrast was complete when the two men came face to face at Bari. I shall feel it still more forcibly as I approach Foggia, which was the capital of the Southern States of the Hohenstaufens. This transitory glimpse of the ancient town has given me the liveliest desire to visit another town in which was born a genius, who was equally far from possessing the mystic ardor of a St. Francis and the fierce ambitions of a Frederick II. I speak of Recanati, where the great pessimist writer, Giacomo Leopardi, lived at the beginning of our century. He wrote there the elegies now so famous, as well as several Nocturnes and Meditations—Love and Death, The Solitary Sparrow, The Infinite, The Evening of a Festival.

It is said that Schleiermacher once, in a burst of enthusiasm, began a lesson on Ethics with the strange exclamation: "Let us sacrifice a lock of

hair to the manes of the illustrious and unfortunate Spinoza !” Less romantically, but with equal devotion, I sacrificed one of my holidays to a pilgrimage to the house of this poet, no less illustrious than and equally unfortunate with the philosopher of La Haye. I knew that there, at least, the sort of melancholy which I had felt at Assisi would be spared me, and that a family worthy of giving birth to such a man had made of the palace in which Leopardi lived a veritable museum consecrated to his memory. What a lesson for us who have allowed the house of our beloved Balzac to be demolished—that little house which I shall always see in fancy, gloomy and ruinous, two steps from the splendors of the Avenue Friedland. The destiny of the novelist is symbolized in this mean little house. He had dreamed of the magnificence of success, of what he calls, in the confession, *Peau de Chagrin*, the regalia of the man of genius, and he had succeeded, after thirty years of labor, during which he produced twenty masterpieces, in securing, in the Paris of elegance and luxury, the miserable shelter of a pension Vauquer !

If the palace in which the Italian poet spent his youth is an object of greater veneration

than the dilapidated house in which the author of the *Comédie Humaine* died, Recanati is, in exchange, sufficiently difficult of access to discourage the visits of the admirers of the illustrious poet. The first stage of the journey is melancholy Ancona. I say melancholy, because I have visited the town three times, and three times I have seen it under a lowering sky, a melancholy seaport at which steamers with red-painted hulls, returning from their trips along the coast of the Adriatic, slowly unloaded their cargos. From Ancona to Loretto the journey is made by train, and although short, it is fatiguing from its slowness; from this point a carriage takes the traveler in two hours to the wild town of Recanati. I spoke just now of the irony of certain contrasts. It is a contrast, and a striking one, which has placed the birthplace of the most hopeless singer of atheism in the vicinity of Loretto, where the house of the Virgin is exhibited. This house of Mary was carried, the legend says, from Palestine to Italy by the angels, and it continues to be, with the church built beside it, one of the sanctuaries most venerated by Catholic piety. An image of Our Lady, of black wood, carved by St. Luke—it is still the legend that speaks—incrusted with gems,

flashes back the light of the tapers that burn within the little church. Was this peaceful image of the Mother of the Saviour—arrayed, imprisoned, so to say, in glittering gems, but with so sweet an expression on her modest countenance, with all this adornment—ever visited by the poet? Assuredly, when, speaking of his longing for oblivion, in his admirable lines on the infinite, he exclaims: *E il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare*, he beheld no Star of the Morning, as the litanies say, shining over this bottomless sea, this soundless abyss into which it was so sweet to him to sink. Yes, it is impossible but that he should have come hither, attracted, like all contemplative natures, like all who are disenchanted with life, by a half-scornful, half-envious curiosity to experience the faith of the lowly and the simple. He who has denounced so magnificently the pitiless cruelties of that all-powerful nature which created us for suffering:

E l'antica natura onnipossente,
Che mi fece all' affanno,

assuredly contemplated, with a feeling of envy, as I did, the faces of the poor women kneeling before the Madonna. He saw them comforted

by the supernatural perfume of the Mystic Rose. They found in this secluded chapel the Refuge of Sinners, the Consolation of the Afflicted, the Help of Christians. They felt the Source of all True Joy, the Vase of Spiritual Ecstasy, overflow within their hearts. They said: "Hail, Mary," and the Mother Most Pure, the Mother Most Admirable, the Mother Most Amiable, smiled upon them. And then Leopardi went away without having bent the knee, alone with what he somewhere calls the dominating thought.

Cagion diletta d'infiniti affanni,

he adds—"Adored principle of infinite sorrow." He went away by the same road by which I came to-day, that, ascending height after height, stops at Recanati. The little mediæval city appeared to him as it appeared to me, wild and unchanged. He at once cursed and blessed its tragic solitude with that contradictoriness of feeling so natural to the poet. Nothing ever fully satisfies those complex souls that, living on desire and expending all their being in hope, feel most keenly the insufficiency of those things whose beauty they best appreciate. Through narrow streets lined with ancient houses, Leopardi walked

to the palace of his ancestors—a long edifice of red brick with swelling front, and twisted bars before its high windows. A terraced garden, planted with cypresses and laurels, extends on one side. How naïvely symbolic of the gloomy poet's fame is this mingling of the laurel with the cypress! Here and there stand statues in formal walks, dear to the classic Italian taste. Ascending the steps the bas-reliefs, the busts, and the columns of the vestibule sustain the classic impression. But on this side of the Alps the word *classic* resumes its original signification of noble. It no longer means empty artifice and insincere conventionality. In Italy, the oldest of the Latin countries, the relics of former times are almost all remarkable for their *grand air*. Many of the patrician houses have fallen into decay, but this decay is always dignified. I do not know whether the Leopardi Palace was maintained during the poet's life, as it is at the present day, in a style of luxury befitting the lord of a town. In any case, the surroundings amid which the poet's youth was passed must have been austere beautiful and grand—two qualities which are found in his elevated and rare style. This simplicity is a charm peculiar to the lofty

style of Italian poetry introduced by Dante, under which one feels the glorious origin of the language. Certain fragments of Carducci, also, afford, in our own day, admirable examples of this simplicity, as, for instance, the divine sonnet :

Passa la nave mia, sola, tra il pianto
De gli alcïon, per l'acqua procellosa.

The quality of the words, in which the Roman vigor still palpitates, the direct force of the image, the construction, at once flowing and concise, of the sentence, give this poetry the charm of *precision* which is the distinctive characteristic of the genius of the Romans. It is at once sober and grand. It resembles, in some sort, an inscription cut on stone, and yet it is neither stiff nor conventional. When we examine the works of the best representatives of Latin genius the old term *taste*—perverted by conventional criticism—resumes its true signification, and we comprehend how many are the intellectual virtues it includes. There are others more touching than these; those are the supreme virtues.

If in order to have those virtues it were only necessary to grow up in an antique Italian palace, the whole peninsula would be peopled with Dantes, Cinos, Petrarchs, and Leopardis.

Therefore I have noted the harmony existing between the dwelling in which the latter grew up to manhood and the character of his genius only to point out, *en passant*, an instance of the influence of environment, generally exaggerated. I saw other instances of this influence some ten years ago, when I visited Combourg and Newstead Abbey. But it would still be necessary to explain why, of all the thousands of children who, during so many centuries, have grown up to manhood in equally favorable surroundings, only three or four have manifested genius. When we examine closely this theory of the conditions necessary to the creation of a work of art, we stumble inevitably against the irreducible personal factor as, in analyzing the conditions of any act we stumble against the other irreducible factor—responsibility. The investigations of determinist criticism on this subject possess, none the less, a keen interest. If they do not furnish us with an adequate explanation of genius, they at least throw a clearer light on its manifestations and its nature. In regard to Leopardi, for instance, a visit to his palace, to what he himself calls “the silence of the paternal nest,”* explains at once the character, so

* Poi che del patrio nido
I silenzi lasciando. . . .

peculiarly intellectual, of his pessimism. The library in which he spent the greater part of his youth has remained as his father, Count Monaldo, formed it. It is a lofty and spacious gallery subdivided into several cells which are filled with books. All the works necessary to a thorough knowledge of history, philosophy, theology, and various foreign literatures are collected on these shelves. In this wonderful workroom the poet shut himself, a Faust of twenty, at once ingenuous and passionate, meditative and morbid. He buried himself here in philological and philosophical studies, writing verses for relaxation. His portrait, which hangs on one of the walls, shows a sickly and delicate face, with a strange sadness in the glance at once tired and piercing. Here it was, among these old parchment-bound volumes, that the broad stream of this poetry of negation had its source. It was in reading these books that the young noble of Recanati came, in his twenty-fifth year and before he knew what life was, to the most absolute condemnation of existence which has been formulated in the century of Schopenhauer and Byron.

The profound originality of Leopardi's pessimism consists, in fact, in the almost impersonal character which, in certain particulars,

though with innumerable differences, recalls the phenomenism of Lucretius. Both, although poets and great poets, were philosophers, in the fullest sense of the word, capable of thinking as well as feeling, as remarkable for their erudition as for their imagination. They began by general aims and not, like Byron, like Musset, like Heine, by an altogether personal grief. The thought of their own unhappiness seems to have come to them only after the knowledge and as a corollary of a general law applicable to their own among other destinies. Hence, in the case of both the one and the other, that absence of anecdote, if one may say so, that accent of solemnity which gives to the elegy on Love and Death as well as to the fourth book of "The Nature of Things" something cosmical and grandiose, the beauty of a hymn of an atheistic liturgy. With Leopardi, however, the modern weariness of life dominates. He sings no exulting hymn of revolt against belief such as the pagan poet intoned against the gods, intoxicated at seeing the heavens deserted and death reduced to a placid and dreamless sleep. This is because, among the books of the hermit of Recanati, side by side with those which taught him the vanity of all things human there were other works,

Christian works, which spoke of a heavenly Father, of eternal life, of a supreme justice joined to a supreme goodness. Leopardi believed them, if only for a day, although even then, on the threshold of manhood, as he tells us in the Evening of a Festival, the universal misery was rendered painfully sensible to him by the most trifling incident. Even the song of a peasant walking along the road oppressed his heart as he listened to it gradually growing fainter in the distance.

Ed alla tarda notte
Un canto che s'udia per li sentieri
Lontanando morire a poco a poco,
Già similmente mi stringeva il core.

He felt life going, like the passers-by, the time for happiness passing away, like this song. Yet his father was a good Catholic, his mother a pious woman, his two preceptors were priests, and to one of them, the good Jesuit Giuseppe Torres, he through life remained strongly attached. He believed, then, and profoundly. Although the nostalgic plaints of Rolla never break forth in his shorter poems, the belief of early days may be divined by the pain which his present convictions caused him. Between the atheism of a pagan

like Lucretius and the atheism of a Christian who has ceased to believe, like Leopardi, there is a deep gulf. It is the difference between the loneliness of a foundling and that of a child who has lost his father, only the melancholy of the poet of the Marches is a melancholy without remorse. The purity of his life is recognizable by this sign, which gives him a place apart among the erring tribe of his brothers, the despairing children of the age—the landscapes of his reveries are peopled only by pure forms. Almost all of them, we divine, were perceived through the windows of his study, and with none of them is associated the recollection and the grief of a desecrated ideal. Even the chaste Vigny is not thus pure, nor is he equally tender. As in the legend of St. Francis, which I read on the way to Assisi, the characters with whom the poet of negation communes most willingly are a sparrow, a plant of broom, a constellation. With what melancholy does he speak of those beautiful stars of the Bear which he saw shining over his father's garden! How eloquently does he sing the happy death of the birds! “Thou, lonely sparrow, arrived at the evening of the life marked for thee by the stars—confiding in destiny—wilt not mourn

thy lot!" How lovingly he describes the flexible broom at the foot of Vesuvius, which adorns with its fragrant sprays the desolate fields, the distorted lava streams of former eruptions, and the smoking soil of the *solfatare*! Who could ascend the ever-menacing volcano, on its yet intact side—that facing Pompeii—without admiring those flexible shrubs, as tall as a man, with their clusters gleaming golden against the shining black sands? How vividly has the poet described, in a few words, the landscape and the charm of these last tufts of bloom among the ashes! "Now all around—a wide ruin spreads—where thou standest, graceful flower, and, as if—through pity for this desolateness to heaven—thou sendest a perfume so sweet—that the desert is made to rejoice." Thus saint and atheist arrive alike at a sort of admiring envy of the innocence of unconscious life. But the saint envies its innocence, the poet aspires to its unconsciousness.

In this library it is impossible for one who has read and admired Leopardi not to be assailed by thoughts like these. A glass case contains souvenirs of the great poet, piously preserved. All his manuscripts are here, from his first tasks as a schoolboy to his most

famous poems. Seeing this veneration for every object touched by his hands, I could not but remember the bitterness with which I witnessed, eleven years ago, the sale of Balzac's papers. His manuscripts went to the highest bidder, without the thought even occurring to the then minister—M. Ferry, if I remember aright—of buying a single one of them for the state. Neither his country nor his family was represented in the hall of the Rue Drouot in which the sale took place. But for the noble enthusiasm of a stranger, M de Lovenjoul, who disputed the possession of the papers, one by one, with the dealers, and to whom all Frenchmen of letters owe an imperishable debt of gratitude, where now would be those relics, more precious to us than any chart or treaty, for they tell of the toil of genius? Do not the mere corrections of those wonderful proofs, at which the master worked so furiously, enable us to assist at the birth of the masterpiece? In the little museum at Recanati, on the contrary, at sight of this little library formed by Pauline Leopardi of all those works in which the slightest mention is made of her brother, at sight of those venerated rooms shown to me by a servant who, as a child, had waited on the poet, I felt a

tender gratitude for this rare and beautiful example of devotion. There is in every human being who has at any time produced a work of beauty, a something sacred which justifies and commands this posthumous devotion. When it is lacking both the compatriots and the family of the artist are alike culpable. Perhaps small towns are more favorable for a display of this veneration than a vast and tumultuous city like Paris, and old families more apt for it than new ones as quickly scattered as founded. Perhaps, too, a sister's disinterested affection found a pleasure in this task which another could not find. At all events this visit to the house of the melancholy poet ended with the sweet reflection that Love, whatever may be said, is stronger than Death. If they were born, as he himself has said, at the same hour, Love ever cherishes the invincible desire to conquer this fatal rival; and he has conquered him here in this old palace, where the poet still seems so present that one fancies one can hear the sound of his footsteps and his voice singing the adorable verses of his "*Ricordanze*": "Alas, Nerine, in my heart still reigns—the old love. If once more to the festival—if to the assembly I walk, within myself I say : Oh !

Nerine, for the assembly, for the festival—never wilt thou adorn thyself again.—May is coming and its green branches and its songs—will bring lovers together again.—I say: My Nerine for thee never again—will spring return, never will love return again.—Each serene day that dawns, each flowery vale mine eyes behold, each joy I feel—I say: Nerine henceforth shall know no joy. The plains—the air she shall behold no more.—Alas, thou hast passed away, eternal Sigh of Mine, thou hast passed—and of all my beautiful imaginings, of all—my tender feelings, the sad and dear emotions of my heart—there remains but the bitter memory.”

XVI.

FOGGIA, November 15.

THE railroad which runs from Ancona to Foggia, then to Naples on the one side, and on the other to Brindisi, skirts for several hours the shores of the green Adriatic. It follows so closely the coast of this dangerous sea that, in very stormy weather, the tide almost washes the rails. What a landscape this long strip of barren yellow sand, incessantly attacked by the green waves which advance upon it and retreat and advance and retreat again, while in the distance the billows, greener, of a hue like that of emerald, rise and fall! Not a trace of cultivation is to be seen. The villages, perched upon the heights, remind the traveler of the former insecurity of the coast ravaged by pirates for centuries. They came from Greece near by, from Tripoli, from Algeria, and, more than all, from the still half-savage countries on the opposite shore of the sea, which mark the boundary of the Slave world. By the conquest of Algiers the whole coast of the Med-

iterranean was forever freed from this scourge of centuries, yet who ever even thinks of being grateful for this to the Royal House of France? The fishing boats—six, ten, thirty, according to the importance of the place—now lie on the sandy beach before these mountain villages in perfect security. They display sails of barbaric coloring, oftenest of red, decorated with mysterious emblems—a sun, a star, a crescent, a lion, a warrior in armor. Sometimes the sails are violet, sometimes brown, yellow, or green. Only by these signs do we know that we are on the confines of another world, of the Levant, long an untraveled land, which is itself a confine of the Orient. And we are on the confines also of southern Italy, as you may see by the fruits exposed for sale at the railway stations. For at the stations here, as everywhere, are to be seen the natural products of the country, the luscious fruits by the sale of which the poor peasant makes a living. They bring their baskets, filled with bunches of enormous grapes, to the windows of the railway carriages. Large fresh figs lie side by side with dried figs, strung, fifty in a bunch, on wooden skewers. These country traders have already the quick speech, the loud voice

which drowns half the syllables, peculiar to the kingdom of Naples. The wine at the buffets changes also. It is now a sort of dark perfumed syrup surcharged with alcohol, compared with which our thick wine of Var seems light and transparent.

In the distance looms up the Gran Sazzo d'Italia, which dominates the Abruzzi, already covered with snow. On the seacoast the dark promontory of Mount Garganus raises its wooded heights. What visions of the past does this scene call before the mind, from the fabulous and classical times of antiquity down to the more romantic Middle Ages. The islands of Diomedé are close by, and close by also Manfredonia, founded, as its name indicates, by the son of the Emperor Frederick II.; and gradually the mountains diminish in height, and the train crosses rivers running between marshy banks, alternating with rivers whose beds are almost dry. The vast plain of Puglia suddenly appears in sight, the wide desert plain of Tavoliere, a vast pasturage, animated, twice in the year only, by the passage over it of immense flocks. But in it are Foggia, where Frederick II. held his court; Lucera, where he garrisoned his Saracens; Castel Fiorentino, where he died. The

memory of this enigmatic personage has lent an interest to the landscape for me since leaving Jesi. It lent an interest to the landscape, also, for two other travelers whose works I read during the hours spent on this slow-moving train—Gregorovius and François Lenormant. Let it be said, by the way, that the celebrated German historian surpasses the French archæologist, known only to specialists, neither in erudition nor in intelligence. What an injustice it is that the excellent works of the latter on Apulia, Lucania, and Magna Græcia, an incomparable collection of descriptions, anecdotes, and general information, should not be more widely known! Unhappily they are written, in the first place, by one of our compatriots; in the next place, by a savant who had the misfortune to be also a writer of fiction; and, finally, for readers who scarcely ever travel. If these works had come from beyond the Rhine or the British Channel they would doubtless have been discovered by some essayist who would have made himself to a certain extent famous merely by translating and annotating them. This has been the fate of other works of still greater value. Was it not through a translation of Goethe that we learned of the exist-

ence of the "Neveu de Rameau," one of the masterpieces of the eighteenth century and of all time?

Foggia, where I arrived after more than ten hours' travel by this leisurely train, is a large city, built entirely of low houses, on account of the earthquake which destroyed it during the last century. The broad streets, the massive arches of the ground-floors of the houses, the absence of upper stories, attest the impression produced by the terrible scourge. It seems as if the city awaited its return as a mole awaits the assault of the sea. Neither the cathedral in which Manfred was crowned, nor Frederick's palace, was left standing. Of this imperial residence there remains only an arch inclosed in a house whose front bears the words "Comitato Medico." "The inhabitants say that many travelers, twenty, perhaps, every year, come to visit this port, and that they speak strange languages." This naïve remark of an English Guidebook is only too fully justified. One must be deeply interested in the history of the great Cæsar of the Middle Ages to find in this single relic a compensation for the wretched hotels of Foggia, the filth of the carriages, and, on rainy days like that on which I write these lines, the

thick mud which accumulates in the streets. And yet all Frederick II. is in this arch, with the contrasts which make him an eminently representative type, the moral confluence of so many different currents. Let us try to analyze this type with the help of the simple but authentic document before us, and pass away the time, while the rain continues to fall, by evoking from the shadows of the past this strangely fascinating figure.

The arch is supported by two eagles, similar to that seen on the golden coin stamped with the effigy of the prince and called *Augustalis*. I have before me, as I write these lines, one of these curious pieces; the prince is represented on it as a Roman emperor, his head crowned with laurel, a toga draped over the shoulder. The exergue bears the inscription: "*Fredericus, Cæsar, Augustus,*" and the features show a visible and awkward effort after the Neronian expression. The eagle, similar to those which decorate the gate of the palace of Foggia, is on the obverse side. It is indeed the bird of the Roman medals, with long neck and outspread wings, the lean and rapacious hunter—lean with a never-satisfied hunger—whose claws are ever open, ready to seize—what? The empire of the

world, this *orbis Romanus*, which, from the decline of ancient civilization down to the recent days of Napoleon, has haunted the brain of every insatiable Western conqueror. This dream, which Charlemagne has perhaps best realized, how could Frederick of Suabia fail to cherish it? The tradition of his imperial rights impelled him toward it already, and especially his princely appanage, the mosaic of his kingdoms so strangely dissimilar: Germany, Sicily, Jerusalem. He, too, dreamed then of playing the part of the Roman Cæsar, and with so much the more reason as he had the genius to play it. But there existed another heir to this *orbis Romanus*, a spiritual heir, but who was always on the eve of passing from spiritual power to temporal. This Cæsar of souls was the Pope. The entire life of Frederick was spent in fighting Rome. The chronicle of Matthew Paris is full of letters addressed by him to the king of France, the king of England, the king of Castile, in protest against Gregory IX. and Innocent IV. From his earliest years he had conflicted with the ecclesiastical power; to his profit, apparently, since he received from the Holy See in preference to his competitors the investiture of all his kingdoms, from Germany

to Sicily. To grant them to him, was not this to reserve the right to take them away from him again? And the same Holy See which made him emperor and king was to strip him, later on, of the empire and of his Italian possessions. They tell, these eagles of the arch of Foggia, of the greed of universal dominion and the long struggle of the ambitious Emperor, his never-ceasing wars, his fruitless outbursts of anger, unending disputes, until finally the Decree of the Council of Lyons raised up in rebellion against him almost all his vassals. "Ah," he sighed one day, speaking of the Eastern Sultans, "how happy they are to have no Pope among them!"

If this arch, through this simple emblem, reveals the policy of the prince, through its inscription it tells also that in Frederick, under the emperor, was concealed a man of intellect and culture. Its semicircle bears an inscription in Latin verse :

Hoc fieri jussit Federicus Cesar ut urbs sit
Foggia regalis sedes inclita imperialis.

Are these bad verses, in the taste of the times, the composition of the prince? At all events, they are in the style of the distichs, often malicious, which he dedicated to his

various residences. Do they, as Lenormant sustains, prove that the palace of Foggia was built according to plans made by Frederick? He had, at least, this much in common with the other Cæsars, his models, that he united to the ambitious aspirations of a tyrant and the wisdom of a ruler a genuine artistic taste. In the ancient world Adrian was the perfect type of this imperial diletterism. Frederick II., a sufficiently able writer to have composed a good treatise on falconry, surrounded himself by preference with superior men. His confidant, he who had, as Dante says, the keys of his heart, and who used them to open or shut it with so much art, was Pietro Vignano—the author of the graceful poem, “Amore in cui i’ vivo ed ho fidanza.” On the alert for every new idea, his biographers, Jamsilla among others, described him to us as founding schools, sparing the lives of his prisoners, when, like Albert of Brescia, they were apt for scientific labors; the friend of Michael Scott, whom he caused to translate Avicenna’s abridgment of Aristotle’s “History of Animals”; the protector of Jewish philosophers, as Judas Cohen Ben-Salomon, with whom he kept up a correspondence on geometry. A manuscript at Oxford, which

contains a number of questions addressed by him to Arabian savants, gives an idea of the extraordinary extent to which he carried his philosophic skepticism. Did he not propose to them the two following problems: "Has the sage Aristotle proved that the world is eternal? If so, by what arguments?" "What is the nature of the soul; is it immortal?" The dreadful impiety of such inquiries does not prevent the imperial freethinker, however, from surrounding himself with astrologers and believing in their predictions. He gave a bizarre proof of this faith on the occasion of his marriage to Elizabeth of England, waiting to consummate it until the stars were at a certain point in their course. Then sending her women to her: "Watch well over her," he said, "for she is pregnant with a male child." This union of unbelief and superstition explains the persistent animosity with which he was persecuted by the Papacy. Frederick—in this the Pontiffs did not deceive themselves—was something more than a political enemy, as other emperors had been. He was a disputant who was more dangerous to Rome than the ablest captain, almost a forefather of the Reformation. In his letters against the Holy See occurs the following

sentence, which is singularly in advance of the epoch: "Reflect," he wrote to the Christian princes, "on the usurpations and the pride of those prelates who, unwilling to be satisfied with dominion over the soul, seek also to obtain, by all possible means, the empire of the world." He caused a German bishop, who was one of his followers, to write to him in the following terms: "Let the Roman pastor guard his Italians. We, who have been chosen by God to be the faithful guardians of our sheep, will drive away from our flocks those wolves in sheep's clothing." He himself wrote in answer as follows: "In poverty and simplicity it was that the primitive Church lived when, fruitful, she engendered all the Blessed recorded in the catalogue of Saints." What more could the rebel Luther have said?

Standing, as it does, in the town of Puglia, at a few miles' distance from the Saracenic Lucera, this palace gate, which resembles somewhat in its shape the gates of the Alhambra, recalls another eccentricity of Frederick, his adoption of Oriental customs; a taste for which he acquired in Sicily, then but recently freed from Mussulman rule. From the time of his expedition to the Holy Land the friendly character of his relations with the

infidel chiefs shows that he was on such terms with them as to regard himself almost as one of themselves. But still more in his manner of living, his harems, the sumptuousness of his entertainments, his protection of the trade in black and white slaves between Italy and Africa, the privileges accorded to the exiled Moors of Lucera, did he pose as a veritable Oriental prince. In all this he showed himself to be an absolute stranger, not only to the prejudices but to the general customs of his race and his time. Read, in that Mâtthew Paris before cited, an account of his reception of his brother-in-law Richard of England, and say if Saladin would have received some great Mohammedan lord otherwise: "The Emperor ordered baths to be given him with perfumed vapors and massages suitable to refresh him after the fatigues of his sea-voyage, and, at the banquet served to him, he caused *almes* to dance before him, who walked on balls with marvelous skill. They wreathed their arms, playing and singing and bending forward their bodies, keeping time to their songs." Was a minute description of the ballet-dance to be expected from the pen of a Saxon monk of that age? Let us add that these were not merely caprices of a cosmopolitan grand

seignior. The frequency of the emperor's sojourns in the isolated palace of Puglia, the jealous seclusion in which he kept his wives there, guarded by eunuchs, his cruel treatment of the priests who had wandered into his town of Lucera, and a thousand other facts of the kind go to show that he had almost ceased to be a German prince in order to become a half-Asiatic sovereign. His ferocity on divers occasions, the perfidy of his dealings, his summary methods of executing justice, all unite to give an Oriental character to this complex type of a Suabian, so exceptionally cultured, but, through this very culture, so far in advance of his age, so modern in his wit, his want of faith, his fancy, his desire for knowledge. The great Catholic poet has not misjudged him. He has not placed him, in his *Inferno*, either among the cruel, notwithstanding his iniquities, nor among the sensual notwithstanding his debauches, but rather among the heretics, with Cardinal Ubaldini, celebrated for his scandalous saying: "If there be a soul I am willing to lose mine for the Ghibellines."

Qua entro è lo secondo Federico
E'l Cardinale; e degli altri mi taccio.

—*Inf. x*, 119.

XVII.

LUCERA, November 16.

THANKS to a local train which moves almost like a steam tramway, the ancient town of Lucera is distant only three-quarters of an hour from Foggia. It is impossible to cross, even in this quiet, bourgeois fashion, this corner of the vast plain of Apulia without calling to mind the historical drama represented here in the thirteenth century—the interesting figure of Manfred, the poet prince, his tragic fate, his beautiful and unhappy wife, his children, the last of whom died at Naples, after fifty years of imprisonment; and the first French invasion of Italy, that of Charles of Anjou, the brother of St. Louis, invited by the Popes to take possession of the inheritance of the excommunicated Hohenstaufens. This true tragedy has been recorded with a rare mixture of strength and simplicity by old Nicolo de Jamsilla. Although it is an almost classic passage, for those at least who take an interest in this sanguinary legend of the Suabi-

ans, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing the words in which this chronicler relates the arrival of Manfred at Lucera, after a revolt of his followers. Few accounts give a truer picture of the times they deal with. Tacitus only has passages equal to it, short, but which remain in the memory as the type of their kind. The revolt of several of his barons had rendered Manfred's situation a dangerous one. Driven to the confines of Apulia, he could find a refuge only in Lucera among his father's Saracens. He accordingly set out on a November night, accompanied by a scanty escort, to ride across this plain of Tavoliere to an asylum of which he was not even sure. The rain was falling. "It augmented," says Jamsilla, "the darkness of the night. The prince and his companions were unable to see one another. They could recognize each other only by the sound of the voice and by the touch. They did not even know whither the road they were following led, for they had ridden across the open country in order to throw possible pursuers off the scent." A certain Adenulfo Pardo, a former huntsman of Frederick, who was acquainted with Tavoliere, having often wandered there with the emperor, served them

as a guide. On the lookout for a landmark this man remembered by chance an old hunting pavilion placed under the protection of St. Agapito, erected midway between Foggia and Lucera. The chronicler describes this house to us, in a few words of sober coloring which make a picture not to be forgotten, as "dimly white in the obscurity of the night." The men, drenched with rain, slipped into it, with their horses, so weary that they lighted a fire, against the dictates of prudence, at the risk of being seen from Foggia or Troja, which were occupied by the enemy. Other cavaliers had joined the prince on the way, uneasy because of his having set out with so small a force. But he was so distrustful, even of his Saracens, that he took with him in the morning, to proceed to Lucera, only three companions, one of whom spoke Arabic fluently. Arrived under the walls he was obliged to make himself known— an incident so romantic as to seem taken from a romance—by his beautiful fair hair. Even then they refused to open the gates to him, in obedience to the orders they had received from the traitor Giovanni the Moor; and to obey at the same time these orders and a last remaining scruple of loyalty the guards at

the gate advised him to enter the town through the sewer, saying that once he was within the place they would yield him obedience. "The prince resolved to act upon this advice," Jamsilla naïvely adds, "notwithstanding the ignominy of this manner of entrance, because of the fruits of the victory which would result from it, for it is necessary to pass through narrow roads to reach glory." He leaped from his horse and, crouching before the filthy opening, prepared to enter it. At this spectacle the Saracens forgot the governor's orders. This humiliation of the son of their beloved emperor awakened their remorse. They broke down the gates and Manfred entered in triumph." Freed from personal details, and interpreted according to its profound significance, this anecdote suffices to show what was the discipline of the soldiers of that epoch; how weak, how personal, and how dependent on the feeling of the moment.

The uncertain nature of the devotion of his troops Frederick II. had very clearly perceived. In transplanting the rebel Arabs from Sicily to Apulia, and investing them there with certain privileges, he formed a prætorian guard, unassailable, at least, by the

great power of the epoch, that excommunication which at times made the Pope the emperor of emperors. He sought to persuade these Mussulmans of two things: first, that he, Frederick, would never interfere with their religion, and second, that with the exception of himself, all who surrounded them were enemies. He tried to solve this twofold problem by keeping them in a forced exile and crowning them with benefits. The choice of Lucera, standing on a rock in the very heart of Puglia, was a stroke of genius. Turn where they would the Arabs saw before them only the ramparts of Christian and, consequently, hostile cities. Had they tried to escape they would have been captured before they could have gained the seacoast. But, once the first feeling of homesickness was past why should they attempt to return to Sicily and their native vale of Mazzara, planted with the olive and the cactus, with its ruined temples and its lofty promontories, "the dwellings of idols," as they called them? In the fortified inclosure which the Emperor had assigned them, had they not their mosques, their judges, and their laws, their customs and their language? Afterward, increasing in numbers, they invaded the city itself, taking

possession even of the cathedral, in which they left not a single priest. In the beginning they had been restricted to the fortress outside the town. The city of Lucera still exists. It is a large, wild-looking burgh, with steep streets. It has a numerous population, evidently African, but no nearer the Arab type than the rest of the population of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in which there is so large an admixture of black blood. When Charles of Anjou entered Lucera victoriously, he spared the town. Of the castle, which he, and his successor after him, repeatedly assaulted, those ferocious soldiers, and time, more destructive than they, have left only the walls.

A little carriage, drawn at a trot by a more or less sure-footed horse up the steep acclivity, takes the traveler, in a short quarter of an hour, to the town. The carriage stops at a plateau, on which the only building, with the exception of the castle, that still remains standing, is a half-abandoned convent. It is guarded by two monks of so savage an aspect that, had they lived in his times, the redoubtable Cardinal Ruffo, who waged a war with these provinces as pious as it was ferocious, would assuredly have enlisted them among his soldiers. The solitary situation of the

old Saracen *enceinte* contributes to give it a still more formidable aspect. It is built of red stone and the object of the foundation is evident merely from the vast area which it covers. The wall around the fortress is nearly a mile in extent, and it follows closely the escarpment of the rock on which it is built, forming, as it were, a second Lucera beside the other. The name castle is not here correct; this is a real city built outside the city proper. Square towers project beyond the walls at intervals, forming isolated bastions which it would be necessary to take, one by one, like so many small fortresses. Stronger towers, round in form, citadels contrived for a desperate resistance, stand at each angle. A deep moat runs along the side which faces the city. The eastern gate is situated exactly under the donjon, and in a re-entering angle so acute that a surprise would be manifestly impossible. Indeed, this formidable outwork was able to resist the fiercest assaults. The place was never reduced except by famine; without cannon it was impregnable.

The ruins of the donjon, the massive square structure which assured the safety of the place by dominating the gate, are still standing. They are, indeed, the only buildings that re-

main. All the other bastions, as well as the round towers, are like the towers and bastions of a stage scene—an exterior within which there is now nothing, not even a ruin. The contrast between the remarkable state of preservation of the circular wall and the sinister bareness of the space thus inclosed is striking. Passing through the gate the visitor finds himself in a vast melancholy grass-grown space, where the inequality of the soil, depressed in places, renders it impossible to guess what species of structure, or rather structures, stood here, for this inclosure contained a whole population, distributed in independent families. The situation is favorable for small houses constructed in the Arabian style, for narrow, winding streets, for all the equipments, in short, of a citadel. Innumerable fragments of pottery strew the ground, the antiquity of which becomes suspicious when we consider that this waste land has served for some years past as a site for popular festivals. The people of Lucera and the surrounding villages come here, several times in the season, to eat, drink, dance, and make merry. The imaginative Lenormant is, perhaps, then, scarcely justified in seeing in this *débris* specimens of a manufacture special to

the Saracens. When we have discovered in the form of the towers, with their walls sloping outward at the base, principles of fortification peculiar to the Arabs—a somewhat naïve discovery, indeed—we have exhausted all the positive data which the place furnishes to the archæologist. But the sources of food for the imagination in this land full of tragic memories are inexhaustible. This Lucera Saracenorum had its heart here, within the inclosure of its walls. Here Frederick lived in a palace furnished according to his complex tastes, in which the luxuriousness of an Asiatic monarch was united with the exquisite refinement of a humanist. He made its embellishment his constant care. We see him, in the course of a campaign on Roman territory, despoiling a convent of two bronze antiques and sending them to Lucera to adorn his harem. Here, while Charles of Anjou fought with Manfred the battle of Benevento, the wife of the Suabian prince, the beautiful Helena of Epirus, of a type of beauty Greek like her name, awaited, weeping and embracing her children, the issue of the conflict. With what an eager glance must she have scanned the horizon stretching then, as now, beyond the ramparts, vast, bare, and solitary.

The most diminutive of messengers would have been visible to her leagues and leagues away on that plain where not a single tree grows. Here the unfortunate Saracens, after all their princes had been slain, were repeatedly besieged by the kings of Anjou, until that last investment, described with an indifference that appalls, by another chronicler, Saba Malaspina : "Many among the besieged went out to gather grass, which they ate like the beasts. It happened at times that through excess of weakness they were unable to raise themselves from the ground. The French killed them as they lay, sparing the most vigorous to sell them as slaves. Sometimes through a brutal curiosity they would open the bellies of the slain, which they found filled with the grass they had eaten." An atrocious incident which explains better than could any commentator the facility of the great mediæval poet in inventing the ferocious punishments of his *Inferno*. The history of the times furnished him with almost all of them. Those unhappy Sicilian Arabs preferred, however, to endure the horrors of this hopeless siege rather than deny their faith. So strong was their attachment to Frederick and to Manfred that they rose in revolt against Charles of Anjou at the

mere rumor of the approach of Conradin, the last of the Hohenstaufens—that Conradin executed at Naples, for whose death Heine bitterly declares Germany will ‘never forgive France. The Saracens, on their part, refused to believe in his death. Their first revolt had been cruelly suppressed, but this did not prevent an imposter, who declared himself to be the grandson of Frederick, from finding them ready to place their lives at his disposal. It was necessary to exterminate them in order to conquer a devotion which invested with the charm of romance this Mussulman colony of the infidel Cæsar. The melancholy of the landscape, the barren solitude of this *enceinte*, the unbroken line of the fortification walls, everything, in short, about this little-known ruin is in harmony with these memories. Long after he has descended the hill the traveler turns back to look once more at the rampart that still dominates the plain. And he can fancy he sees under the blue sky, at the embrasures of the red towers, swarthy faces of Moors, as they are painted in old frescoes, with light-colored turbans, green robes, dark scimitars, armor of damasked gold. Swelling cupolas of white mosques rise above the walls, and this town in the heart of Puglia,

within a few days' journey of Rome, in which not a cross is to be seen, seemed to the Christians of that day like a vision of hell. Pope Innocent IV. said that he could never think of it "without feeling as if it were a thorn piercing the eye of the Church!" That Frederick II. should have dared to plant this colony here shows, still more than his questions regarding the immortality of the soul and of the eternity of the world, the strength of his unbelief.

XVIII.

BARI, November 18.

To go from Lucera to Bari is to leap over six or seven hundred years, notwithstanding the comparative proximity of the two places. While the ancient refuge of the Saracens remains almost intact, after so many centuries, in Bari the earthquakes were so frequent and so severe that one-half of the city is scarcely a century old; and, for my part, I think this new city charming, with its broad streets crossing each other at right angles, where the sea is forever in sight, as the Alps are forever in sight at Turin, and what a placid, what a voluptuous sea—the sea of which the *Leuconoë* of the poet speaks:

La mer voluptueuse où chantaient les Sirènes—*

deeply, darkly blue like liquid sapphire, so that it almost seems as if an object immersed in it must come out stained blue. The houses that border the streets remind one of Tangiers and

* The voluptuous sea where the Sirens sang.

Cadiz by their intense whiteness. They are all whitewashed, square, massive, and many of them present the peculiarity of having, above their first completed and inhabited story, a second unfinished story. It appears that the difficulties which have recently arisen between Italy and France have caused a rapid decline in the prosperity of Bari. It had acquired immense wealth, as I have been told, by the exportation of the wines of Puglia, which have a great deal of body and are peculiarly suitable for dilution, at the time when the phylloxera devastated our vineyards. I have made no inquiries in the matter, not caring to spoil the pleasure of my journey by the unavailing recollection of unhappy political quarrels, owing to which the phantom of war, declared or threatened, looms to-day over all Europe. This is the fatal result of the nationalist theory so unwisely conceived and practiced by the governments which are the offspring of our unfortunate revolution, in contrast with the profoundly politic work of the former beneficent monarchical governments. Is a sanguinary conflict, in which all Europe shall be involved, now to be avoided? With what storms are those clouds pregnant whose shadows darken the horizon on all sides?

Ah, let us not think of this ; let us rather listen to the philosopher of the "Banquet": "As a traveler, assailed by a violent tempest, shelters himself behind a little wall from the dust and rain which the wind beats against him, so, when you can do nothing to prevent the tempest which menaces the state, remain quiescent, occupied with the cultivation of your spirit ; and esteem yourself happy if you can spend this life free from every iniquitous action and leave it full of peace and sweetness, with a sure hope."

This council of the greatest and purest of the pagans—but still a pagan—next to Marcus Aurelius, seems easier to follow as we approach Greece and the cities of Southern Italy. This is already Hellenic ground and, assuredly, pagan soil. When fever spares them, these cities give the impression, in spite of the vulgarities of modern civilization, of an opulent, easy, and full life. Whatever the amount of its present commerce this sunny Bari, for instance, seated on the shores of a sea of liquid sapphire, appears to me, on this warm November day, imbued with that spirit of unconquerable naturalism which Sainte-Beuve has expressed in the follow-

ing lines, the refrain of his "Eclogue Napolitaine."

Paganisme immortel, es-tu mort? On le dit.

Mais Pan tout bas s'en moque et la Sirène en rit.*

More prosaically does the material prosperity of the country blessed by the gods of antiquity manifest itself, by countless signs, in the large market near the old port. There is here a most attractive display of fruits of every color, arranged with a fanciful daintiness that gives the lie to general report. Tapering clusters of golden or black grapes are piled in baskets. Parted pomegranates show their red seeds. Water melons, brown pears, small white apples with the fragrance of muscatel wine, lie side by side with enormous dried figs sprinkled with aniseed. Besides the venders of the town, country people display for sale poultry and game in an abundance which explains their cheapness. I saw a woman of the place buy two live ducks for less than three francs and some thrushes for two sous each. Near by, the fish market justifies, by the variety of species of fish for sale, the old epithet of *Piscosum* applied to it by Horace. The

* Immortal Paganism, art thou dead? They say so.

But Pan smiles softly and the Siren laughs the while.

bluish or pink scales flash back the light when the sun strikes them, and the venders, swarthy, sensual-looking, half-naked in the warm sunshine, laugh and show their fine teeth.

When we remember that wine is here the national product and, consequently, as common and cheap as at Bordeaux, that the broad pasture lands of Puglia feed a larger number of cattle than any other part of the kingdom, that Foggia, near by, is still celebrated for the stores of wheat deposited in caves excavated in the public square, it should not surprise us that the Italian emigrants who leave their country through a spirit of adventure always cherish the hope of returning to it, and still less that the possession of this land should have been so much disputed. From Hannibal, who fought his bloody and unsuccessful battle of Cannæ near by, to King Murat, the restorer of Bari, how many wars! During the Middle Ages the prince of Benevento, and after him the Mussulmans, laid siege to and took this town which the Norman king, William the Bad, caused to be razed to the ground in 1156. Another Norman king rebuilt it, and the town became a point of departure for the Crusaders. Then

the great wars began once more with the sieges and battles of which the old quarter still bears the traces, with its houses clustered around the church in which for eight hundred years the remains of St. Nicholas have reposed. There a network of narrow and tortuous streets, shut in with walls probably haunted by epidemics, difficult to keep in repair, or to clean, shows the fatal results of the insecurity of those times, while the new city, with its prosperous air, seems a suitable abode for the primitive paganism that made of Magna Græcia, of which this is the boundary, a paradise of pleasure, and this fact alone shows the future which awaits this land of abundance—*si qua fata aspera rumpas*, the poet who most loved it, and who felt its misery most deeply, has already said to this lovely Italy.

Sainte-Beuve was right; the ancient gods have never quite forsaken this heaven and this earth. Paganism, deathless, even in the ascetic Middle Ages, is everywhere to be met with, mingled with the victorious rival religion, if not to destroy, at least to corrupt its spirituality. This secret permanence of the old Olympians has its symbols in these churches, the columns of whose crypts still

preserve on their capitals the emblems of the pagan temples from which they were torn, in which the altar fronts are fragments of sarcophagi still adorned with pagan sculptures, whose every detail reveals the invincible need of the image, of the myth rendered palpable and concrete, of the mystic sensualism which is also a religion, but an unsatisfying and already impure religion. I have just visited this curious church dedicated to the relics of St. Nicholas, on the façade of which are seen strange columns supported by oxen—the oxen which drew the body of the saint to this spot, at which they stopped—and I counted by dozens the Madonnas attired, in the Spanish fashion, with a magnificence of ornament closely bordering on idolatry. Precious stones sparkle in their ears and on their necks, the silk of their robes shimmers with silver. The seven swords of sorrow are represented here by seven little golden poniards, there by a simple stiletto, but it is vermilion with a chased handle. Their feet are covered with open-work stockings and shoes on which gleam paste buckles. One of them wears rings on her fingers, another gloves, and this latter displays a *batiste* handkerchief on which is embroidered an *M* surmounted by a crown.

It is difficult for a stranger not born in the South to understand how the sentiment of mystery, the underlying basis of all religion, can be allied to this precision of details. That it is so allied, however, anyone will be convinced who sees the faithful kneeling before these statues. The images are more than half pagan and yet these devotees *pray Christian*, if I may be allowed the expression. I thus saw, in this very church of St. Nicholas of Bari, an old lady uplifting in prayer to the Madonna a wrinkled and careworn face. Attired in deep mourning, her eyes reddened by the tears she had shed, an expression of infinite sadness on her mouth, her hands, covered with mittens, clasped together, she was evidently offering up her grief on the altar before which she was kneeling. Evidently, too, she saw in the Virgin standing on this altar, who was precisely the Mary of the embroidered handkerchief, something which I did not see—as a mourner feeds his grief by gazing at some object, insignificant in itself, that belonged to his dead friend. We would do better to admit that the law so clearly formulated by Taine, regarding the irreducible diversity among the primitive forms of imagination which remains the great discovery of modern psychology, is

true in religion as in the arts, rather than servilely imitate English tourists, who are invariably moved to ridicule or indignation by this contrast between the Christian spirit and the pagan form. The effort may be difficult at first, but it is due to the sincerity of those who find some worthier meaning in these practices so evidently national, since they are everywhere to be met with in the southern part of the peninsula.

I shall not dwell, then, on my visit to the crypt of this church of St. Nicholas, where the relics of the saint are inclosed within a silver altar. If the ornaments of this altar, which dates from the seventeenth century, are scarcely suitable for a Roman Catholic church—for this mortuary cavern resembling a primitive catacomb—the trade which is carried on in the manna exuded by the bones of the saint is still less in accord with a place of worship, and less still the countenances of the persons who carry on this trade. I found here again that curious tribe of dangerous sacristans, a sort of semi-bandits, who infest the churches of Seville. I tried to forget these trifles, to remember only the frescoes of Assisi, where an ingenuous pupil of Giotto has represented the miracles of that bishop

of Myra so touchingly described in the legend which makes him a truly popular patron, the protector of children, of sailors, of prisoners, and of slaves. He is a saint for the lowly, for the poor, and he was brought by poor men to this city. The sailors who transported these relics from a ruined tomb in Asia Minor, which was guarded by three monks and which was constantly in danger of being robbed by the Mussulmans, were not mistaken in believing that they had assured to their Bari a permanent protector. Even at the present day the remains of St. Nicholas are the principal curiosity of the town. They have been for centuries the occasion of innumerable pilgrimages of all sorts of persons, among whom, as I believe I have already mentioned, was St. Francis of Assisi. Yes, the saint of the Stigmata has been here. He descended into this very crypt, when he came to found in Bari one of the thousand convents which sprung up at once on the foundation of his order. Here, in this pagan town almost facing Corfu, the island of Nausicaa, he met the great skeptic, Frederick II. An inscription on the castle alludes to a trick which the Emperor played on the monk. This practical joke seems to have been a

temptation of a very simple nature. "It was here," the inscription, indeed, says, "that a lascivious woman, or rather the ferocity of a fiery hydra, was conquered by Francis." We may imagine what delight the mocking spirit of the skeptic prince took in thus trying the virtue of the most illustrious representative of naïve and simple faith. This incident, which recalls the famous scene of Don Juan and the beggar, represents Frederick in his true character as a Voltairian scoffer born by mistake in the Middle Ages. The anecdote, however, is not recorded, to my knowledge, either in the "Fioretti," or in the work of St. Bonaventure. Perhaps the admirers of Francis feared to evoke the memory of the sacrilegious Emperor, or perhaps these stories were composed from the confidences of St. Francis himself regarding his visions, the *poverello* thinking, either through modesty or decency, that he ought not to reveal to his followers this scandalous adventure. Besides, there is nothing simple in the character of that Frederick who boasted that he had never had anyone between his hands without having "emptied him, as a miller empties a sack of wheat for his mill." Perhaps in this mystification he sought to accomplish some polit-

ical purpose at the same time that he gratified his bitter and mocking humor. His instinct as a statesman did not deceive him with regard to the scope of the Order founded by the saint. This mystic lover of Christian poverty, who only wished to recruit souls for the God of suffering, has forged the most formidable instrument of democratic agitation ever possessed by the Popes—in the same way that the admirable master of the inner life, Ignatius Loyola, forged for Rome her most powerful instrument of spiritual domination. This influence of the Franciscans over the people was made apparent, even to the most blind, when these monks, a few years later, went from village to village distributing Pontifical letters against the Emperor. Under date of 1229 we find in the "Chronicle" of Richard of San Germano the following note, so expressive in its conciseness: "The Minor Brothers were expelled from every part of the kingdom on the charge of having hawked about apostolic letters with the purpose of inducing the citizens to submit to the Pope." Had Frederick II. in 1220—this is the date of his meeting with St. Francis—already foreseen this influence of the Minor Brothers over the multitude, and did he comprehend that the

invincible power of the Order resided in the unassailable reputation for sanctity of its founder? Whatever be the solution of this little moral enigma, does not the encounter in this place of the two worlds of ideas, incarnated in these two men, strike the imagination as one of those paradoxes of destiny where history borders on romance?

I found another instance of this romance of history in the place where I had assuredly least expected to find it, and under a very familiar but for that reason all the more striking form. After making many efforts and going through those wearisome and complicated proceedings, which one of my cis-Alpine friends wittily calls the *destino Italiano*, I succeeded in obtaining entrance to the palace of the Ateneo. I examined the halls set apart in it for a museum or rather the beginning of a museum. Its treasures consist, according to the Guide, of a small number of Italo-Greek vases discovered in the excavations, which continue to be made with more or less regularity, according to the official reports, on this coast, at Monopoli, Egnazia, and Fasano. And the book of travel is right in characterizing these vases of Bari as interesting, but only second-rate specimens of their kind. The same scenes are depicted on almost

all of them—bacchanalia, combats, games, sometimes a woman at her toilet. There can be no doubt but that the figures raised, now in black on a red ground, now in red on a black ground, are not of the same period. The difference in the execution, here an extreme delicacy, there vagueness and an overloading of detail, reveal in the one case the divine youth of Greek art, in the other this art deteriorated by the influence of the Roman decadence. But a profound knowledge of the subject is required to appreciate all these different shades. I confess, then, I was but little interested either by these vases or by the coins of Magna Græcia of which there is in the Museum an unclassified collection. I saw the sword of Metaponte, the Crown Prince of Tarentum, the tripod of Crotona, the mad bull of Sybaris, the lion of Reggio, the eagle of an Augustalis. The coins, however, require to be handled considerably in studying them, and it is quite natural that this manipulation should be interdicted to transient visitors.

There are also in this Museum some panels in a very good state of preservation, one of which represents an archangel killing a dragon. They are the work of the Venetian, Bartolomeo Vivarini, who has also left

us a painting beside the principal altar of St. Nicholas, and they show in a high degree the qualities of this rare artist—vigor of coloring, joined to a distinctness of drawing bordering on sharpness, which recalls Mantegna. Unhappily there is only a very small number of these drawings. There is no label to tell us where they come from, and, not finding them mentioned either in the Baedeker or in Sir Henry Layard's excellent work, I can only bring them to the notice of travelers more competent, and better qualified than myself to discuss the authenticity and the value of a painting.

I should, then, have gone away from the Ateneo without gleaning a really new impression had not my glance chanced to fall on a glass case containing the most commonplace of objects, and for this very reason one of the most significant, the best calculated to produce an impression of reality. This object was nothing else than a silver traveling *nécessaire*, the various articles in which, set one into another, fitted easily, notwithstanding their number, in a small, portable, flat mahogany case of oval form. This box, in fact, must have traveled much and rapidly, for on all the articles contained in it as well as on the lid was to be seen the letter *G*. It was the dressing-case of Joachim

Murat, the innkeeper's son who, by the will of Napoleon and his friends, became king of Naples and the Two Sicilies, without ceasing to be a prince of France, and Grand Admiral. The handsome coins on which appears his noble and striking face, framed by curling locks, bear the same initial. At sight of these silver utensils which accompanied the great cavalier in his wars, the brilliant phantasmagoria of the First Empire rises irresistibly before the mind. All the marvelousness as well as the grandeur of that epoch are brought into startling relief by the curious juxtaposition of history by which this relic of a soldier finds a place, as if by right, among relics of ancient Greece and of the Middle Ages! It seems a trifle, yet if one goes back in thought a century only, to 1788, the strangeness of this soldier's life amazes as might a tale out of the Arabian Nights suddenly become possible and true.

I have just read again the whole history of Murat's short reign, supplementing it with Lenormant's dramatic account, written on the spot, of the prince's execution at Pizzo. He quotes in it—and it is always worth while to cite a historical document like this to show the monstrous iniquities of political hatreds—

the decree according to which judgment was executed on the brother-in-law of Napoleon:

We, Ferdinand, by the grace of God, etc., etc., have decreed and do decree as follows :

Art. 1. General Murat shall be brought before a military commission whose members shall be appointed by our Minister of War.

Art. 2. The *condemned* shall not be granted more than half an hour in which to receive the consolations of religion.

FERDINAND.

NAPLES, October 9, 1815.

Nothing could give a better idea of the methods of the Napoleonic conquest, as well as of its boldness, its incoherence, and its scope than the story of the man executed at Pizzo. In 1808 the Emperor had need of his brother Joseph to govern Spain; he took him away from Naples as he would have removed a prefect, and, by a statute dated at Bayonne, he gave the throne to Murat, without further delay or explanation. The work required, in fact, was merely that of a prefect, that is to say, to carry out the master's plans. Joachim, who from the time of his entrance into Madrid had set his heart upon the throne of Spain, so much so, as Marbot tells us, as to fall ill when

he learned the Emperor's choice, felt deeply the weight of the master's yoke. He complained bitterly, with his soldierlike eloquence, of being only the king of an outpost. We see him taking up at once, per force, the work begun by Joseph. It consisted, according to the formula of the modern Cæsar, in the application of the laws of the young French Empire to the old monarchy of the Two Sicilies. Napoleon, here as elsewhere, wished to reconstruct before pulling down. The war of invasion continued. The Bourbons held Sicily; the English Capri, Procida, Reggio, and Scylla. Innumerable royalist brigands infested the roads. No matter; Joachim must fight and legislate at the same time. He pushed forward the war, then, on land and sea, and at the same time decreed measures, one after another, which were altogether foreign to his mode of thought, the abolition of feudal rights, the unity of taxation, the regularization of justice, the creation and repair of public roads, the formation of a national army. Such were the principal lines of a programme for the carrying out of which peace and time would have been necessary. But at the same time, the emperor, according to his habit of exacting the last effort of energy of which hu-

man nature was capable, called on his brother-in-law for troops for Spain, the Tyrol, Wagram, the States of the Church, in turn. Finally he poured his entire army, together with himself, into that human torrent which he precipitated on Western Russia in 1812!

It might seem as if no trace could remain of a reign so short and thus employed. And yet when Ferdinand I. returned to the palace of his ancestors, under the eyes of Napoleon's sister, a prisoner on board an English vessel in the roadstead, he was obliged, like Louis XVIII., to sleep between the sheets of the usurper. The French had been driven out but their laws remained. Circello, Medici, and Tomasi, the three Ministers of the returned king, restored their confiscated property to the emigrants, but they also indemnified by government annuities all the establishments founded by Joachim—*monts-de-piété*, hospitals, industrial and scientific societies—so that the great reforms in the departments of instruction and administration were confirmed by law. The same Ministers endeavored, it is true, to give the preference to the Sicilian officers, but they were compelled to retain the troops and the staff of Murat, if only to put down brigand-

age—and the national army was created. They changed the civil code, indeed, in certain points, divorce and inheritance, but they allowed its chief outlines to remain—and equality before the law was established. They suppressed the Council of State, but they left untouched the communal and provincial system which they had found sketched out on their return, and which had proved to work better than the former system. Here, then, as everywhere else, the Emperor and his lieutenants performed the work of revolutionists even while they desired, like the chief himself, and like Murat, monarchical magnificence, the security of the throne, and a recognized place in the councils of the old kingdoms of Europe. All that fatal spirit of cosmopolitan democracy which, according to all appearances, is destined to destroy Europe, the handsome cavalier who was the king of Naples carried about with him, like Napoleon's other marshals, along with the bowls, the razors, the little coffee and tea equipages, the egg-cups, the cups, shut up in this flat box. As I look at it I see again the mornings of battle-days when these frivolous utensils were set out in the tent, the wild gayety of the prince, about to mount his horse, with a simple whip, his costume of a

modern paladin, his splendid impetuosity, which made him, as Michelet superbly says of his rivals in cavalry, Lannes and Lasalle, "a great living banner." I see again his tragic end, his disembarkation at Pizzo when, following the example of his imperial brother-in-law, he, too, risked his return from Elba, and was betrayed by the infamous Maltese, Barbara. His political fame had been darkened, in his latter years, by a personal ambition ; but how nobly he died ! How proudly, recovering in the presence of danger the energy of former days, of Egypt, of Italy, he responded to the judge who wished to interrogate him : " I am Joachim Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies ; now, sir, leave the room ! " How like the gay officer of hussars his jesting remark to the canon Masdea, to whom five years previously he had granted money to rebuild his church, which had been destroyed by an earthquake. " Well ! Monsignor Canon, I hardly suspected five years ago that I was giving you money for my tomb." With what coquetry, in this instance sublime, he cried to the soldiers, " Respect my face and aim at my heart ! " And he died thus, to be buried in the common pit, in a coffin which, the rope breaking as it was being lowered into the grave, was dashed

to pieces in the fall, so that it was impossible ever to recover his remains, and his tomb in Bologna, with his statue so overloaded with ornamentation as to be tawdry, is an empty tomb. He was forty-four years old.

XIX.

BRINDISI, November 19.

I STOPPED midway between Bari and Lecce to visit the ancient tomb of Brindisi, that Brentesion of the Greeks where Virgil died, that Brundisium of the Middle Ages where Frederick II. espoused the beautiful Yolande of Jerusalem. It is at the present day a town with tortuous streets and ill-built houses, which exists only by its port and for its port. Travelers stop there only long enough to make the connection between trains from the north and the boats. Thus it is that this town does not even possess a railroad station worthy of being compared to that of Auxerre or Fontainebleau, although it is the great halting place between the west and the east. As to the buffet, it is a fifth-class *betola*, as they say here, where it is almost impossible to get a breakfast. Fortunate the traveler when he can find a vehicle which will take him from the station to the sea, to that quay where one embarks for Greece, Egypt, India. Once there, however, the view is enchanting ;

the broad roadstead stretches away, rendered doubly secure by the form of the land, which gave Brindisi its former name of Stag's Head, and by its strong dyke, constructed of enormous blocks of stone, raised to prevent the choking up of the port and its fatal consequence, malaria. The green waves splash against the red-and-black hulls of the packet boats and the seagulls skim the surface of the water. A few hours' voyage over this sea brings you to Corfu.

Three years ago, on a winter's night, alive with throbbing stars, I embarked at this very wharf for Corfu, the memory of which had remained with me, an unfading vision of my youth. And I feel a strong temptation to make this voyage again in one of the steamers that will lie yonder to-morrow in sight of the marvelous mountain of San Salvatore, which the Greeks called the Pantocrator. It looks like a colossal altar rising up to heaven, and one can fancy one sees by the light of the setting sun the golden azure and purple veils of old Olympus floating above it in the sky. I had chanced to bring with me that Guide of Southern Italy which I had with me on the occasion I refer to, and on the flyleaf I found some unfinished verses which I transcribe

here as a souvenir of my awakening on the deck of the vessel, less than four days after I had left foggy, muddy, and ice-bound Paris :

With its cool, shady valleys, green with olive groves,
From out the waters of the sapphire sea
I see before me Corfu, the happy island, rise.
To the left, gleaming white against the pale blue sky,
Stretch the lofty snow-clad mountains of Albania;
And beneath the calm heaven, over the placid sea,
The vessel sails on with motionless shrouds
Through which the white seagulls wing their wild flight.
On this December day, across the enchanted gulf
A breath of summer languorously blows,
And the warm, perfume-laden breeze
Seems a voice saying : " Without a beloved one,
Answer, young stranger, what doest thou here ? "
" O Nature ! I come to adore thee and to dream ;
To evoke the glorious phantoms of the distant past
That for six thousand years have charmed the hearts of
men—

Ulysses, the Wanderer, and the daughter of the king.
I come to revive within my soul the feeling
For the pagan beauty scattered o'er thy shores,
With which so many dreamers have ennobled their
dreams,
From gentle Virgil, of the mysterious heart,
To Byron, who came to die beneath these radiant skies."

These poor verses were intended to serve as a prologue to a collection of my " Nostalgiques " entitled " *Helène*." The idea of this book occurred to me on the deck of the vessel,

but it has remained an idea, like so many other poems dreamed of but never written. But were the only result of a journey to Italy and Greece the transitory renewing of the inward springs so quickly exhausted by contact with the world, would it not still be worth while to make this journey, and all the more because of certain grandiose suggestions which it may furnish, as happened to me recently, on my short visit to Brindisi? After a hasty look at the port, and agitated by the recollection of my former visit, I followed my guide to the little square not far from the quay, on which rises a plain Greek column crowned by a capital embellished with little figures. "Here," said the friend who accompanied me, "ended the Appian Way." This simple phrase sufficed to cause me that thrill familiar to all who have cultivated what, for want of a better word, I shall call the *historic sense*. The thought that the queen of roads, beginning among the tombs of the glorious dead, ran directly from Rome to this spot, to extend its branches beyond sea over the shores of Asia and Africa, brought vividly before me that *imperium Romanum* whose vanished splendor still held the Middle Ages under its spell. The grasp of this people on the world be-

comes, so to say, visible, merely by looking at the ruins of this commanding way which ran, like a great military thoroughfare, from one end of the peninsula, first, and finally from one end of the world to the other.

One can understand the feeling of pride with which a citizen of the Eternal City, on his way from the capital to embark for some town of the Levant, would travel along this road which the legions had traveled, setting out for and returning from so many campaigns. This past magnificence gives even now a never-to-be-forgotten charm to the miserable crossway on which this isolated column stands. And yet it is only a piece of grass-grown waste land, On the plinth of the column the people of the neighborhood have spread pomegranate rinds, which they dry to use as an antidote to the fever. Beside this plinth is another plinth on which once stood a marble shaft like the one which still stands here, terminating this military way, apparently, by a species of open triumphal gate. The people of the town sold this column to the people of Lecce, and the latter made it the pedestal of a statue of St. Oronte, with an inscription abusive of Hercules, the ancient guardian of Brundisium. On the column which still remains standing,

and on all the walls around the little square on which it stands, vari-colored posters are displayed. We are, in fact, on the eve of the elections which are to confirm in office or to defeat the all-powerful Don Ciccio, as the Sicilians familiarly call Crispi. My amiable host is himself one of the candidates, and his name is at the foot of one of those professions of faith which serve to adorn the old city.

Not long since, on a visit at his house, a grand palace of venerable aspect full of souvenirs of the past, I saw on his writing table Amiel's "Journal," some volumes of my beloved master Taine, several numbers of the *Revue Philosophique*; all the evidences, in short, of a high degree of culture of a cosmopolitan character. I asked myself, as I walked with him along the streets and saw him dispensing bows and handshakes around, how all this culture could serve him in obtaining the suffrages of the illiterate inhabitants of the port. And this right of suffrage, of which the modern world is so proud and which will finally destroy civilization, always and inevitably leads to some absurdity of this kind.

Stendhal has said, "I would rather pay court to M. Guizot than to my porter," formulating, in his usual pithy manner, the paradox which,

by lowering the source of power, necessarily subjects intelligence to numbers and, consequently, to vulgarity. Although my companion and I scarcely spoke of his chances, the few words he exchanged with one and another showed me that in Italy, as with us, there is, in every election, a mechanism of manipulation which must sooner or later become a business like any other. This was naïvely expressed by a notable Auvergnese, with whom I was discussing the programme of a deputy from our province and the probabilities regarding the coming legislature. "Let us understand each other, sir," said the worthy man to me; "are we talking politics or talking elections?" However illogical and impure this source of power be, it is, alas, the only one, the sages reply to this, and since we cannot change it let us ameliorate it. As the business of the state, however, must be transacted we should appreciate those who, like my guide, uninfluenced by base ambition, with leisure, refined tastes, and the freedom of a cosmopolitan existence before them, bind themselves down to the ungrateful duties of public life. In a few years more, when the charlatanism of the competitors shall have progressed a little farther, will there still be

found persons of worth willing to make these sacrifices? The democrats will then be satisfied. They will, in all probability, have destroyed France and Italy, and they will be on the way to destroy England. Oh, what a hideous world they are making—they have already made—for us! But enough. Bitter reflections of this sort are never very opportune. A statesman, who was also a man of wit—this was often the case in former times—once formulated this sage maxim, true of many things in this world, but especially true of politics: “When matters do not go as we wish the best thing to do is to wait and cease to think of them.” If I had had, while walking along the streets of Brindisi, already beginning to look like those of Corfu, the magic branch that evokes the spirits of the dead, and been able to call back to life the old poet who has shed a luster over this town by his gay journey, I fancy that the witty Horace would have given me no different counsel. Or, perhaps, as a true Epicurean, he would have advised me to think, rather, of the barren enthusiasm of Italian and French democracy in order that I might rejoice at being out of the battle. Neither of these theories is very noble, but one feels one’s self excusable for putting

them in practice, when one knows one's self to be destitute of ambition, and when one has undertaken a pilgrimage, simply as a man of letters, to a poetic land. The fact is that, for my part, I soon forgot that there existed either a Roman or a Parisian Parliament, in visiting—after the column of the Appian Way—the few other objects of interest of the town: in the first place a deserted church of the Knights of Malta; then the castle, a massive structure begun by Frederick II. and finished by Charles V. It was made for the splendors of a court and it serves to-day as a prison for galley-slaves. After this ought we to attach any great importance to the projects of the rulers of the hour?

From these two visits I took away with me two quite opposite impressions, the one delightful, the other horrible. The first was caused by deciphering on a broken stone an epitaph in Latin verse, to be found, no doubt, in books treating of this specialty. I translate it here, at a hazard, because it seemed to me worthy of the "Anthology." In this maritime town its truth is still more impressive: "Wayfarer, pause here, wilt thou? I have crossed the seas many times in vessels whose sails sped before the wind—I have voyaged to unknown

lands, and this is the haven which, from the day of my birth, the *Parcæ* have sung for me. Here I fear neither the winds, nor the storms, nor the cruel sea—nor the pirates, nor an outlay greater than my earnings. To thee who hast freed me from care—I say: Hail, beneficent Goddess.” The other—the horrible impression—was produced by having heard, by hearing still, the clanking of the chains worn by the galley-slaves resounding through the castle on the seashore. I have seen many prisons and many abodes of misery, impelled by an ardent and almost culpable curiosity regarding human life, but nothing has pierced my heart like the sound of those chains, forever and forever accompanying my steps, as I walked through the courts and the halls of the fortress. The seven hundred convicts go about, performing their tasks. They are dressed in brown blouses and wear on their heads, according to the degree of severity of their punishment, a red or a green cap. They all walk, dragging the leg weighed down by the barbarous chain hanging from the middle and fastened to a ring riveted around the ankle. The noise made by each one, walking with his heavy step, is slight; but all these slight sounds of iron clanking against iron

unite together in a sort of metallic roar, making the whole fortress vibrate. It is indistinct, mysterious, sinister—as sinister to me as the report of the fusillades which I heard in days past, from the retirement of my college, bursting over Paris in the May of 1871. Ah, never shall I forget that noise ! Only, the firing did not last, while, during every day in the year and every hour in the day the castle re-echoes with the tragic concert of expiation as it mounts to the silent heaven with every step, every movement of the unhappy prisoners. The feeling to be read on their countenances is not fierce and cruel anguish ; it is stupor in the face of an irremediable doom. These slaves' faces, never illuminated by hope, give no evidence of secret and fierce rebellion against their fate. But this fate, however resigned to it they may be, is none the less irrevocable. The sight of these men, prisoners for life within the precincts of the galleys, is still more melancholy in these surroundings that speak of travel. From all the windows are visible the blue waters lightly ruffled by the breeze, which the free seagulls skim, and which bear away and bring back every day so many free voyagers. One must remember, to be able to endure this spectacle of crushed

humanity, that there is blood on all these hands that pull off the cap to salute the stranger; the tragedy of a crime behind all these looks that follow him with a touch of gloomy curiosity. I saw one of the prisoners, an old man, affectionately petting a kitten lying beside a cat on the edge of the terrace. His black eyes and pallid lips smiled at times good-naturedly. Apparently the animals are accustomed to this old man, for the cat comes of her own accord to rub her head against his hand, on which the veins stand out like cords. This patriarch has three deaths upon his conscience. I repeat this to myself. I satisfy myself that the labor, performed in spacious, well-ventilated workrooms, is comparatively light. I know that the prisoners are made, by a wise rule, to labor by turns at the cultivation of the soil, and that the town, formerly infested by fevers, has by this means once more become habitable. I remember that all social order rests on the assumption of responsibility, consequently on the punishment of crime. Why, then, do I feel, independently of the almost physical sensation of pity, a profound, an irresistible sense of iniquity in the presence of this punishment without possible redemption? Why, seeing as I do, in the

almost universally brutal faces of these wretches, traces of inherited ferocity, do I ask myself whether society be not in part responsible for the consequences of these instincts? How far has it carried its work of education? How large a part in the crime a poor man commits have the examples he receives from those above him? In the eyes of the Judge before whom we must all appear, when we leave this troubled existence, may not these be the more culpable?

The sad and monotonous sound of the chains, that sound in which there mingles at the same time something of the implacability of fate, and of complaint, seems to put these questions to the visitor; and it follows him long afterward, reminding him of problems on which the revolutionary demagogues have thrown odium as they have thrown odium on the melancholy problem of the inequalities of fate. But it is in vain that demagogues use those painful questions as vulgar electioneering tricks; these problems live with another life than that given them by an artful phrase on a poster, a skillfully concocted article in a newspaper, or a lying discourse from a tribune. It is well to confront them squarely, even though one should no longer have the heart to

enjoy the blue sky bending over the blue sea, the white sails among which the white seagulls fly, the vast olive plantations surrounding the town that blazes in the sunshine; even though one should see a shadow fall on the beautiful mountains—how like our Provence Alpilles—that stretch away yonder toward Tarentum

XX.

LECCE, November 20.

IF the boot to which Italy is likened were furnished with a spur, the dear city in which I write these lines would occupy exactly the place of a rowel. I call it dear, although I saw it for the first time to-day, because it is so attractive, so charming a little city that I conceived for it that sudden sympathy which it is possible to have for things as well as for persons. My first impression of it was all the more delightful as the effect was not weakened for me by any previous description of the Guide. Before coming here the terms *baroque* and *rococo* had no other meaning for me than pretentiousness and bad taste. Lecce has shown me that they may also be synonymous with lightness of fancy, wild elegance, and happy grace. The whole town is, so to say, a piece of delicate sculpture. Conventional ornaments twine around the balconies of the houses, a whole population of distorted statuettes stand above the doors, column follows column, pedestal pedestal,

The façades of the churches are fantastically decorated with festoons, astragals, diminutive faces, and caryatides. Statues crown them, statues flank them, figures droop, arms open wide, draperies fall in folds, angels spread their wings upon them. At Santa Croce, for example, this complexity of fancy borders on delirium. It is indeed an orgy of what elsewhere would be called bad taste. The bad taste here is too exaggerated, it reveals a wildness of caprice too genial for the word to preserve its original signification, all the more as an almost Oriental light streams over this robe of chiseled whiteness. And when fancy remains so living, so exempt from decay, when the cleanliness of the paved streets, the coolness of the shadows, and the mild radiance of the sunshine harmonize so happily with this architectural paradox, the idea of bad taste cannot even occur to the mind. The eye is charmed, almost dazzled, the mind interested, almost ravished, by this delicate tracery of stone, which adorns, like lace or embroidery, all the little town.

This capital of Otranto is a Neapolitan town of the latter part of the seventeenth century, which has remained intact, as the architects of Charles V. first, and then the later disciples of

the Renaissance built it. It is the counterpart of Sienna, and condenses in its opulent prettiness a whole civilization of sensual and gallant gayety, as the latter incloses within its red palaces all the austere and nobly heroic civilization of the Tuscan Middle Ages. One dreams here of light music, of masquerades, of voluptuous and free festivals, of an Italianized and happy Spain. There mingles with the air a breath of the wind which fills the sails of the barks in the "Embarcation for Cythera," in which the sadness of the great and melancholy Watteau found expression. It is almost unnatural and yet it is exquisite. This *baroque* is not only in fact a marvel of spirit, and imagination, a certain delicacy of fancy mingles with it which reveals, under Italy and Spain, the old Hellenic groundwork. In this province of villages in which Greek is still spoken, a trace of the antique spirit seems to have lingered everywhere. The airs which the children sing have a slow and melancholy cadence, very different from the quick *cantilena* of Naples. The inhabitants have a soberness of gesture which contrasts with the excitability of the neighboring South. Among the sights seen in the streets there are refinements of taste in which one would

like to behold the proof of a refined race—like that little wooden bridge mounted on wheels which spans the street on rainy days, so that you may cross from the one sidewalk to the other without spattering yourself—and when, as at present, it is a market-day, the forms of the earthen lamps, with their elongated spouts, and of the two-handled vessels—I was going to say the amphoras—for oil and wine, suffice to remind you that these peasants from the neighboring plains are the modern heirs of the Cretan colonists who landed there with Idomeneus, and the descendants of the ancient subjects of Daunus, the father-in-law of Diomedes.

Behold me, then, in the heart of Magna Græcia, where I have already seen statues of this same Daunus and Idomeneus standing over the doors. The very names of the streets here preserve a trace of those distant memories and of others, almost as distant, but more authentic: Daunus and Idomeneus, heroes of fable; Ennius, the poet, who was born at Rugge, hard by; Augustus, who heard the news of Cæsar's death at Lecce; Adrian and Marcus Aurelius, who occupied the post when the town was nearer to the sea, have served these streets and squares as godfathers, and

their names alternate with those of Godfrey, of Bohemond, of King Tancred, of Manfred, of Gauthier de Brienne, of Frederick II. Centuries of history are in this little spot of ground, but they are here indeed only as history, as tradition, oral or written. You would seek in vain for monuments attesting this great and glorious past. Nowhere has time executed more thoroughly its implacable work of transformation. I had, indeed, been told, that this Magna Græcia was only that "shadow of a great name," of which the ancient poet speaks. I know from books that all the coast, as far as Reggio, the ruins which attest the brilliant civilization contemporary with Pythagoras, had been reduced to fragments smaller than the fragments which strew the sides of the Acropolis. It was at Lecce that for the first time I realized for myself the complete disappearance of what was once a world. And what a world! We are still nourished, in some measure, on its thought. These fragments of ancient Lupiæ consist of some sculptures in the Museum and several vases, of which one, representing a young man leaning on a stick and looking at a young girl, is, besides, of the highest order of beauty. So much for the Greek period. Of the Roman period absolutely nothing remains,

with the exception of the companion column to the column of Brindisi. It is even, as I have already said, christianized, since it serves as a pedestal for St. Oronte, the Pythagorean philosopher, himself baptized by St. Paul, the apostle. Of the Byzantine rule no other traces remain. It is necessary to come down to the eleventh century, and the times of the Norman kings, to find a relic of it—a magnificent one, however. It is the Church of San Nicola e Cataldo, situated outside the gates of Naples. Begun by King Tancred in 1180 it was afterward enlarged by a cloister and passed into the possession of the Olivetans, whose arms I recognized. The three mountains, with the cross and the trees, recalled to me my long and peaceful sojourns in the convent of Monte Oliveto itself. The Fathers were expelled at the time of the First Napoleon, and the old church is now the chapel of the cemetery. It is reached by an alley of tall cypress trees, whose dark color brings into relief the golden hue acquired in process of time by the stone of which the church is built—that Lecce stone so friable, so white, when it is quarried, and which grows so hard and dark in the dry, light air as almost to resemble the fine reddish marble of the Parthenon.

If I have ever regretted not having received or acquired that special education which enables one to discern at a glance the technical value of a specimen of architecture, it was in England, some years ago, on visiting cathedrals like that of Canterbury, and now on seeing this Norman façade; I have *felt* its beauty, however. But such feelings, when they are not based on clear perceptions, are incomplete; it is like listening to music without a knowledge of harmony or to poetry without knowing the laws of meter. I admired greatly, however, two doors, one at the entrance and the other at the side of the church, with their arches of a noble simplicity and the elegance of their perfect arabesques. But would I have been thus struck by them if the church did not rise, silent and solitary, in the heart of the Campo Santo, and still more, were it not for the memory of its founder, that Tancred of Sicily whose name may still be read on the architrave, with the following inscription in Leonine verse, which I transcribe here, preserving the orthography and capitals of the original:

Hac In Carne Sita Quia Labitur Irrita Vita
Consule Dives Ita Ne Sit Pro Carne Sopita.
Vite Tancredus Comes Eternum Sibi Fœdus
Firmat In His Donis Ditans Hec Templa Colonis.

The most marvelous legend which the romancers, once dear to the ingenious hidalgo in his castle of La Mancha, ever took delight in weaving, does not surpass in improbability the true story of the Norman adventurers of whom this pious king was almost the last descendant. I have just read over again an account of them in the work of Gregorovius, and I am surprised that these adventures should not have tempted the industrious Flaubert, when he was seeking, among the real epopees of the past, something to make him forget "his Bovary," as he used to say, and his French bourgeois who "stunk in his nostrils, as he painted them." This expression is his also, and occurs in one of his curious letters to George Sand. On the simple account given by some of their compatriots, who had fought in the service of the Prince of Salerno, the sons of the Lord of Hauteville, a poor gentleman of Cotentin, recruited a party of men, and set sail one fine day for the south of Italy. This took place at the beginning of the eleventh century. What idea did these conquerors form to themselves of the country for which they were bound? How one would like to have an authentic report of the conversations that took place during the journey among

this band of semi-pirates, in whom the mystic piety of the year one thousand was mingled with the sanguinary appetites of barbarians. They were two hundred in the beginning, and it took them less than half a century to conquer Puglia, Calabria, and Sicily, and to found a dynasty of kings, in despite of emperors and of popes. In the wonderful cathedral of Monreale at Palermo, all radiant with mosaics, and illuminated by an imposing icon of a Christ which fills the whole vault above the altar, is to be seen, near the altar also, the image, standing on a pillar, of one of the kings crowned directly by Christ, without the intervention of the Sovereign Pontiff. Had some among them, allying themselves with the Saracens of Sicily, already, like Frederick II., later on, fallen away from Christianity? We see them, in fact, fighting against Greeks and Moors alike, commanding Turks, and attacking Constantinople. Gisulf, one of their knights, in a surprise on this latter city, penetrated as far as the imperial palace. He was beginning to plunder it when, the signal for retreat being suddenly given, he was obliged to fly, carrying away with him, say the chronicles, only some *pignatti*, little pots, which he found in the kitchen. This singular trophy obtained for

him the surname of Pignatelli, and his descendants still bear this emblem on their coat of arms.

Although these times of heroic brigandage were not far distant they had already quite passed away when, toward the end of the twelfth century, the founder of the old church became King of Sicily, as grandson of the first of these Norman princes, the great Roger. The birth of Tancred had been surrounded by mysterious circumstances, and it has furnished a subject for numerous poems. The old King Roger had sent his son to the court of Robert, Count of Lecce, to receive there instructions in the usages of chivalry. The young man seems, more than anything else, to have admired the beauty of Sybilla, the daughter of his host. He won her love, and had by her this Tancred. This intrigue was carried on so secretly that it had not yet been discovered when the seducer was obliged to return to Palermo. There he fell dangerously ill of grief, and feeling himself near his end, he confessed his fault to King Roger. So persuasive was his eloquence that his father sent an embassy for his mistress. The sick man was thus enabled to marry Sybilla and legitimate their son on his deathbed.

Thus it was that the latter, already, through his maternal grandfather, Count of Lecce, was afterward called by the barons to the throne of Palermo. His reign was short, "for," naïvely says old Richard de San Germano, "having seen his son Roger, whom he had caused to be crowned, in order to insure him the succession later on, die before attaining his majority, going so early the way of all flesh, as by a reversal of the laws of nature, this good king's heart was pierced by a sharp pang, and soon afterward an attack of debility carried him off also."

The image of this handsome Sicilian sovereign—this prince of Otranto with the romantic name, the child of a guilty and pardoned love, dying thus of debility—arises before me at sight of the door of the basilica which he caused to be built, perhaps for the repose of his father's soul. These arabesques call up before me his eyes, of the color of the sea, which once looked at them. They bring vividly to my mind the daring exploit of these Norman adventurers—an exploit even more astonishing than the conquest of England. I see, in fancy, this commingling of the North and the East, which makes the poetry of the Crusades, and which

was effected in so strange a manner in this family of De Hauteville. The Princess Sybilla appears before me, mysterious, like her name and her fault, with that phantom-like grace with which the renowned beauties of other days flutter their veils around us. How tender are the lines of Anatole France on this theme !

Les mortes, en leur temps jeunes et désirées,
D'un frisson triste et doux troublent nos sens rêveurs ;
Et la fuite des jours, le retour des soirées,
Nous font sentir la vie avec d'âcres saveurs.*

But where now is the palace that sheltered the secret loves of the youthful pair ? Where the Norman castle in which the Counts of Lecce held their court ? Where are the ram-parts of other days ? This church porch, this inscription ; another, of a similar style, on another door, commemorating the completion of the building ; a legend that might be the invention of a poet—only these mark the passage through the city of this adventurous line. The Suebians, who succeeded the Normans, under Queen Constance, and Henry VI., have left

* Dead women, in their time young and beloved,
Our dreamy senses trouble with a sweet sad thrill,
And the days that pass away, the evenings that return,
Give for us to life a bitter savor.

still fewer traces of their presence, and ancient Lecce would doubtless be now but an insignificant ruin, if the Emperor, Charles V., had not taken the notion to rebuild it. It is owing to this imperial caprice that it presents itself to the traveler's gaze, so attractive, so cheerful, so fresh, and so gayly adorned. I turn around to take another glance at it from the threshold of Tancred's church. Above its walls, above the wrought spires of its churches, rises a belfry, two hundred and twenty-eight feet in height, which serves as a signal to vessels that have lost their way between Otranto and Brindisi. The sea has receded here, as on the shores of our own Provence, but not so far as not to be visible from the height of this campanile.

Less than a century ago a guard remained on duty here day and night, for the purpose of keeping a lookout on this dangerous coast for Barbary, Dalmatian, or Greek pirates, whose approach he announced by a loud ringing of the bell. When this ominous peal was heard afar off in the vast level plain, so rich in olive plantations and vineyards, what a rush there must have been toward the ramparts of all those poor husbandmen, who did not wish to die in slavery in Barbary, or

that their daughters should share the fate usually assigned to beautiful captives, in Voltaire's tales, for which the pretty town might so fitly serve as a scene—so clear are her skies, so gay her streets, and so fancifully wrought the ornaments which adorn her like lace, and which time has mellowed, without dimming their beauty!

XXI.

LECCE, November 22.

I SPENT the morning of these last two days in wandering, without any very definite aim, about the streets, renewing the agreeable impression made upon me by the first view of this paradise of the *rococo*, and in the afternoons I visited, first, a castle, then a city. This city bears a once illustrious name, for it is Otranto; the castle, which is called Cavallino, was unknown to me, even by name, three times twenty-four hours ago, when I alighted from the train at Brindisi. Yet I do not know which of the two visits will leave the more lasting impression on my memory. At Otranto I saw a sublime view of the sea, a mediæval city in a more perfect state of preservation than Volterra or Montepulciano, and an admirable cathedral, bare and gloomy. Cavallino showed me a vision, as it were, of the heroic times of Italy, incarnate in an old man, Duke Sigismund Castromediano; who is ending, in this secluded corner of the world, a long life, during which he suffered years of

martyrdom through devotion to his country's cause.

Which is more worthy of admiration, a view of the sea, and a fine monument, or a noble human character? Is the moral splendor, which suffices to itself, superior to that other splendor which is dependent for its expression upon matter, and which manifests itself by lines defined against the horizon or forms fashioned in marble? Or rather, are they not both the same; and if we conceive beauty as it should be conceived, that is to say, always and everywhere as a *spiritual mystery*, should we not perceive complete unity of origin in its countless forms, however these forms may apparently differ?

These grave questions in æsthetics were, I confess, very far from my mind when I gave the name of the castle of Cavallino to the coachman who was to drive me there; and this on the faith of a book in which I had read that it was a rather curious, irregularly built manor house, distant an hour and a half's journey from the town. This coachman bore, like a good citizen of Lecce, the national name of Oronzo, and he drove, recklessly, a little vehicle, a *carrozzella*, as the Italians prettily say, drawn by a horse caparisoned with bells. And

were they not all—coachman, vehicle, traveler, and beast—protected against the influence of the evil eye by a copper hand fastened in the top of the horse's collar, and whose index and little finger stood up like horns? The road leads across a vast plain, apparently limitless, unbroken by the slightest undulation of hill or mountain.

All the Messapian peninsula from Gallipoli on stretches in a vast plain, covered almost throughout its whole extent with olive trees. In this part of it, however, plantations are wanting. Stones strew the barren soil. Here and there primitive dwellings are to be seen, poor huts barely walled and almost without windows, with a single door and a flat roof. They serve as a shelter for the shepherds during the colder nights. In places the stones have been removed to give room for a wheat-field—a carpet of brown earth, on which the young shoots embroider a delicate design of tender verdure. At times the blue line of the sea trembles on the horizon. Long after I leave the town the towers of Lecce appear behind me, white against the blue sky—a somewhat vaporous blue, owing to the vicinity of the water. Then all the towers fade into the distance, and a wild village comes in sight, in the

center of which rises the castle with a simple, although crenelated façade. I had expected, having made no inquiries, to see some sumptuous pleasure house full of those marvelous *bibelots*, handed down from generation to generation, to be found in secluded provinces of Italy and in Sicily, side by side, sometimes, with the most bizarre modern acquisitions. Through the gate I descry a badly kept yard surrounded by a dilapidated wall. Against the greenish background stands out a statue of some ancestor—a mutilated statue, representing a cavalier in the costume of the sixteenth century. The neglected air of the statue and the court, the visible disorder of the entrance, the worn steps of the vast, empty staircase—which I ascend, without anyone either to challenge or to guide me—the silence of the first hall which I enter, still alone, almost bare of furniture, with its gray painted ceiling defaced by time; all give evidence of a strange abandonment. Everything here speaks of ruin and decay. It seems as if the castle must have suffered from long-continued devastations, and yet it is inhabited; for a servant at last presents himself who goes to inform the master of the dwelling of my presence. And what a never-to-be-forgotten apparition,

worthy of this romantic scene, is this of the last lord of the manor, a venerable old man of eighty, clad in black, tall, slender, and erect, notwithstanding his infirmities. He walks with a halting gait, and his smooth-shaven face, framed by beautiful white hair, reveals, notwithstanding his age, all the haughtiness of his race. An expression at once noble and bitter, proud and melancholy, tells that a too hard fate has weighed heavily upon the man but without conquering the *race*; and this indefinable virtue of the blood is legible in every line of this face, sorrowfully lighted by almost unseeing eyes. The appearance of the castellan harmonized so perfectly with the castle that one might imagine the scene a creation of a Walter Scott or a George Sand. I had before me, in truth, the hero of adventures similar to those recorded in the chronicles of the great Scotch romancer, of Jacobite barons, hunted down, exiled or imprisoned, while their manor-house is falling into decay, and covetous relations are already dividing the spoils among them.

As I followed the secretary of the old laird of Cavallino from room to room through the deserted manor, I learned, in fact, what was afterward confirmed in Lecce, that the duke

has suffered all the tortures of a proscription as cruel as that of the companions of the Stuart conspirator. He threw himself, heart and soul, into the movement against the Bourbons of Naples, after the events of 1848. Arrested and condemned to death, his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life in the galleys, and, refusing to sue for pardon, he was for eleven years a galley-slave. In a corner of the chapel I saw the chain he had worn, like those worn by the murderers in Brindisi, and the red woollen coat in which he had been clad. During all this time his possessions were the prey of plunderers. Faithless guardians reduced the castle to its present ruinous condition. The duke survived, however. His companions in captivity loved him so devotedly that, on more than one night, they made him sleep on their bodies, that the humidity of the prison might not kill him. He at last escaped and reached England, whence he returned at the time of Des Mille's expedition, bringing with him, as the sole reward of his long martyrdom, this chain and his galley-slave's costume. He is now ending his days between Lecce—which is indebted to him for schools, a museum, and innumerable other benefactions—and this castle, which he has left untouched,

whether from a stoical indifference in regard to the comforts of life, acquired in misfortune, or from pride in his sufferings. The busts have remained where he found them ; the grass continues to grow in the courts ; everywhere are traces of decay. The gallery, once magnificent, where the defaced statues still stand on their pedestals, beholds, as he walks with a step rendered slow by age and by the weight of his former chains, this soldier, almost unknown to the *Risorgimento*, who was born to a life of dignified and luxurious leisure, and who preferred the horrors of the galleys to consenting merely to accept a pardon. It would seem as if the recollections of an imprisonment, suffered innocently, must always leave a lasting impression upon the mind ; for I remember the façade of a palace at Pisa on which a great lord of the last century, who had been a captive also, but in Barbary, had caused his chain to be hung up, with this melancholy inscription underneath : *Alla giornata*. What were the scenes that crowded to his mind as, returning from his ride on horseback, or his drive in his gala carriage along the banks of the sea-green, melancholy Arno, he raised his eyes to this device above his door, which might be that of every human life as well as of bondage !

Assuredly, however rigorous the *carcere duro* of Tripoli—or of Tunis, it did not surpass in cruelty Montefusco, the Neapolitan galleys, of which the Duke of Castromediano himself has described the horror in a published fragment of his “Memoirs.” I have just read this short account, and I will give here a short résumé of it—not for its literary merit, although it bears everywhere the inimitable stamp of truth. It has the eloquence of the body which has suffered cold and hunger, and the haughtiness of the spirit which could not be conquered. But this interest it has in common with all other accounts of the kind. The special value of this fragment resides for me elsewhere—in the light it throws on the sensibility of those great Italian patriots, and which is so peculiar to them that it is necessary to understand it in order to understand the nature of their work. They were, indeed, neither braver nor more persevering than many other patriots of other countries, but there was in their patriotism a something more ideal, a heroism of artistic beauty, so to say. For it is to be said in honor of the aristocracy on this side of the Alps, that the best soldiers of the war for independence were the nobles.

If Italy owes her final success to Victor

Emanuel and to Cavour and to the power of General Des Mille as an agitator, we must not forget the struggle sustained for years by noblemen like the Duke of Castromediano, whose example did so much to rouse the spirit of the people. These aristocrats, passionate lovers of liberty, have, like our own in the eighteenth century, done more for the people than the people themselves. The real history of the *Risorgimento* would be, in great part, that of the Italian nobility, in whom the heroic blood of feudal lords rebelled against subjection and above all against the humiliation of foreign rule. I know nothing which better expresses the fervor, at once naïve and sublime, which animated these generous Italians—all friends of our beloved France—than the first lines of the fragment of the “Memoirs” I have mentioned. It opens thus: “Now, when some of our ungrateful countrymen seem to have forgotten the source of Italy’s independence—by what blood and tears it was bought—the moment is a fitting one to recall times very different from the present, times of self-sacrifice and devotion, of fierce and incessant struggles in which the lofty sentiments that prevailed were shared and proclaimed by all pure and virtuous souls. Mine was a generation of oppressed

men condemned to chains and to imprisonment, but of whom thousands felt themselves heroes in their prisons. Times of resistance and of combat! Compared with the present they seem to me beautiful as a poem, because then men fought hand to hand with tyranny, they looked it proudly in the face, and even when defeated by it they did not fear it. *We had so lively a faith, so abiding a hope ; a faith and a hope now realized and which we have bestowed upon our country like a jewel. These are the times of spiritual weariness, prosaic times, and something still worse than prosaic.*" This solemnity of accent is not declamation. It betrays at the same time the enthusiasm of former days and a strange disenchantment with the present. Yes, the old man has come to regret even the sufferings of the past because of the vision which floated before his eyes when he was led, between Bourbon gendarmes, to the prison of Montefusco ; and yet how tragic a picture he gives us of this imprisonment. The walls rise before us, exuding moisture. Rotting straw strews the ground, still reeking with the dung of the horses which had been stabled in it previous to the arrival of the condemned. A melancholy light enters through the loopholes, lighting up the pallor of these men, who

for forty-eight hours had been without food ; and the soldiers, mounting guard on the ramparts, sing with the complaisant cruelty of lackeys of an executioner the refrain of Chiaia :

Chi trase a Montefusco e poi se n'esce
Po' di ca'n terra n'ata vota nasce.*

But, I repeat, the peculiar merit of these pages consists, not in this picture, however true it be, not in naïve sayings like that of the keeper who, taking away the wool from the duke's mattress, said frankly to his prisoner : " I have much more right to a cushion than you, for I am a Christian, and a good one, since I love and serve my king." Others have described in even more vivid coloring the deadly dungeons of Naples and Sicily. But nowhere have I found so well interpreted as in these " *Memoirs* " a species of classic magnanimity, if I may say so ; a sort of antique heroism which reveals, under the modern conspirator, the assiduous reader of the noble works of the Greeks and Romans. That lofty legend of Plutarch, which is for us an old-fashioned and outworn theme, was still living for a

* He who goes to Montefusco and leaves it again

May say that he has been born into the world a second time ?

man like this and for his companions, and all the more living since they had been born, he and his fellow proscripts, and had grown up to manhood, on this soil, the changeless theater of Italo-Hellenic history. Thus there is a description of a meeting between two of these men, Castromediano himself and the celebrated Neapolitan patriot Poërio, which makes one think of a possible meeting between two characters of antiquity—a Phocion and a Demosthenes, a Thrasesas and a Helvidius. The duke and Poërio had never met before although they had taken part in the same insurrection. Both being condemned they came face to face on the deck of the vessel appointed to convey from Ischia, Procida, and Nisida the principal fomenters of the movement.

“It was,” says Castromediano, “on the deck of the *Rondine* that I saw Poërio for the first time. Our names were mentioned and we embraced each other without speaking, in a clasp which nothing has ever loosened. *He was my friend forever.* Sharing with him the sufferings of the galleys; with him the adventures that followed our escape by sea; with him exile and foreign ovations, I had the joy to share with him, also, the triumph of Italy. He *wished me well* [you will recognize the charming

Italian expression] and he loved me. I worshiped him and venerated him in life. A sainted soul, I still mourn him deeply, and how many years it is since he died! Another as pure and disinterested as he I have never met." This same antique fervor, I repeat the word, the only one which describes this species of exaltation in which there is something of affectation, but involuntary—something dramatic, but not theatrical—recurs in the chapter entitled "The Most Perilous Hour of my Life." The condemned man there relates how, in order to force him to sue for pardon, he was taken from prison together with six of his fellow-prisoners. These latter had previously, but in secret, consented to this step regarded by everyone as an act of treachery. His sister Costanza and the bishop of Lecce had petitioned the king on the duke's behalf. He himself, perhaps, in his private letters, had uttered complaints which his judges interpreted as a sign of yielding. He was, then, brought a second time before the committee on amnesties. His six fellow-prisoners, who were about to be set free, did not dare to speak to him; but able magistrates interrogated him, willing at any price to find in his answers a shadow of retractation which might

enable the king to release him; and there he stands, in spite of his immovable refusal to submit, trembling lest he should receive the pardon that would have dishonored him.

“‘Ah!’ I said to myself, when the judges were about to read the list of the pardoned, ‘if I hear my name among them, I am lost.’ This thought pierced my heart. My fear was that I might find myself caught in one of those Austrian snares by means of which the foreign tyrant formerly robbed the noblest and most venerated Italian patriots of honor and renown by treacherously including them in the favors granted to cowards. Happily this was not the case. Pardon was accorded only to the six who had sued for it; as for me, they had brought me to hear their pardon proclaimed only for effect, or to induce me to follow their example. Be this as it may, rejoiced to the very bottom of my soul, and giving thanks to divine Providence, I returned to my prison; the most perilous hour of my life had passed.”

I read these extracts yesterday after returning from Cavallino to the “Florence of Apulia,” as the people here call white Lecce; and with my imagination still impressed by the

vision of the venerable old man amid the romantic surroundings of his ruined castle I asked myself what secret tragedy had been enacted in the soul of this heroic patriot, that his youthful fervor should have ended in the disenchantment attested by phrases so denunciatory of the times. At the close of his irreproachable existence, universally venerated in that Otranto in which his ancestors held sway, this great patriot was, we feel too well, if not disappointed, at least troubled even in the very moment of the triumph of his cause. Alas! this is a misfortune common to all who attain their desire. He had dreamed of a united Italy, and Italy had become united, but it was not the Italy of his early dreams. This unity was effected under human conditions, that is to say, with the accompaniment of the compromises exacted by politics, and these necessary compromises the martyrs of liberty had not foreseen in the hour of combat. They triumphed only to find that their victory was the beginning of other difficulties. New problems arose immediately after accomplishing the great work of deliverance. They thought that a sort of golden age, comprised for them in the magic words "country" and "independence," was at hand. Their country is free, yet there

still remains so much to be done. This is the great sorrow of men of action, and perhaps the chief source of their discouragement.

I fancy that the survivors of '89, those who had the illuminism—insenate, perhaps, dangerous assuredly, but withal so generous—of the first hour must have experienced a similar emotion. After so many sufferings, so many massacres and wars, they found that their task was not even yet begun. They thought, with a tightening of the heart, of what the brutal Augereau had said jestingly, at the ceremony of the coronation: "All that is wanting is the million of men who died to do away with all that!" Must not those who labored for German greatness, and among them their chief, in his forest retreat, have a somewhat similar feeling?

Could any argument prove more clearly than this how illusory is all human effort? If it be true, as certain travelers affirm, that the plain between Lecce and Otranto often presents the phenomenon of a mirage, the old lord of Cavallino, who seems so greatly dissatisfied with the present times, may often have repeated to himself in the depths of his solitude, giving them a symbolical meaning, these

lines written by a poet of his country, Ascanio Grande :

Tal nella Magna Grecia altera vista,
 Non lungi il fonte del mio patrio Idume,
 O giardin novo, o città nova è vista
 Prima cha spunti in Oriente il lume.
 O repentini allettano la vota vista
 Navili, e pur prima che il ciel s'allume.
 Poi fugge il simulacro, e gli occhi sgombra,
 E novello stupor le menti ingombra.*

Whether I be myself the victim of an illusion in discovering this somewhat complex feeling between the lines of the confidences of the proscrip of Cavallino, certain it is that I fancied I discerned it there ; certain, also, that I pleased myself by finding an analogy between the feeling and the verses. I read them again to-day on my way to Otranto in the excellent work which Mrs. Janet Ross, an English tourist, has written on this country, entitled "The Country of Manfred." I must add that I have sought in vain on the distant horizon for

* Thus, in Magna Græcia, a lofty vision,
 Not far from the source of my native Idumea,
 A new garden or a new city appears
 Before the light reddens the Orient.
 Or suddenly, to rejoice the eye,
 Ships appear, and this, too, before the sky brightens.
*Then the mirage vanishes and leaves the vision clear,
 And stupor oppresses anew the spirit,*

traces of the mirage of which the poet speaks and which Mrs. Ross states that she herself saw. In exchange I saw a country of olives and orange trees which reminded me by its richness of the beautiful plain between Malaga and Bobadilla, celebrated also in verse by a poet friend of mine :

League upon league of orange trees and palms,
And mountains darkly outlined against the blue profound
Of a steely heaven blazing with a torrid sun !
Why, divine land, does the sad reawakening
Of the dreams of other days throw a chill o'er my soul
That not all the fires of thy heaven can dispel ?
The zephyrs blow laden with the perfume of the flowers,
But their breath only fans the flame of my anguish.
Ah ! my grief clasps me close with the ardor of fever,
Th' accursed vampire presses his lips to my lips ;
Shall I never, then, cowardly, sad martyr,
Have the strength to crush the monster or to die in his
embrace ?

These verses prove that we should rejoice when another mirage, that of secret sadness, does not interpose itself between our souls and external beauty, and here that would indeed be doubly a pity, so wild and beautiful is the road. White towers still give evidence, at intervals, of the watch formerly kept against pirates. The villages, with their white houses, have Greek names, as Kalimera. The

blue sea quivers in the distance, and beyond the sea rises the coast of Albania, violet, with a sprinkling of white snow. The train stops at a town whose houses are crowded together on a hill girdled by ramparts and bastions; it is Otranto, and it does not seem to have stirred since the famous year in which the Turks made a sanguinary attack upon it. Ah, what a magic scene of coloring breaks upon the sight! The olives around Otranto are gray; the town itself is built of yellow and reddish stone. The sea, both in the circle of the gulf and on the horizon, sparkles with the deep blue of sapphire. Not a cloud floats in the turquoise sky. The mountains of the Greek peninsula, shining in the distance with silvery and amethystine lights, are visible even to their clefts, of a deeper lilac hue, broken by the bright patches of the villages. It is almost the Finistère of Italy, for the Cape of Otranto forms—with that of Leuca, the ancient Yapyx, and Gallipoli—a triangle which terminates the peninsula on the side next Greece.

I remember that toward the end of the year 1887, at the same season of the year and on a day just like this, I stood on a mountain in Corfu, endeavoring to discover this coast of Otranto beyond the waves, in the company of

my old friend Napoleon Zambelli. This indulgent sage, the son of the governor of Zante under Napoleon I., was even older than the Duke of Castromediano. He, too, devoted his life to the freeing of his country, to the recovery of the Ionian Isles by Greece. Although he had not endured the terrible hardships of Montefusco, he had passed through evil times, and yet he had remained so gay, so witty, and benevolent! How is it possible, in view of such contrasts, to establish a general law of optimism or pessimism? I remember, too, that standing on this mountain, watching the broad blue sea, he spoke to me of *Mérimée*. He had become acquainted with him through M. Grassot, who was French Consul at Corfu many years ago, and a youthful adventure of whom seems to have suggested to Stendhal the episode of the seduction of *Mathilde* in "*Rouge*." Zambelli had been intrusted with the task of destroying, after the consul's death, letters received by him from the novelist-senator, only too worthy of being printed at Eleutheropolis, like the first edition of the celebrated pamphlet, "*H. B.*, by one of the Forty," and, translating to me the pretty wish which I have already mentioned, "*May you enjoy your sight!*" he told me that

tears had trembled on the eyelids of the hard and bitter Mérimée, the first time he had heard it.

The memories awakened by Otranto are less modern and less idyllic, for everything in the town seems to date from the terrible year 1840, from which it has apparently never recovered. Everywhere—on the ramparts, in the houses, in the churches—are to be seen enormous stone balls hurled against the town by the Turks. The narrow streets run between ruined and deserted houses which have never since been rebuilt. Few passers-by are to be seen in the streets, and these are sallow from the effects of the fever bred by a sort of festering *laguna* in the vicinity. A village of two thousand inhabitants, wasted by the malaria and making a precarious living by fishing—to this the once opulent Hydruntum is reduced. Its ramparts, however, proclaim its ancient importance as does also the rank of archbishop retained by its prelate, who bears the imposing title of “Primas Salentinorum.” And in truth the cathedral justifies this high-sounding appellation by the melancholy splendor of the building, which has remained intact amid the universal decay. This basilica is, like the San Nicola of Lecce, a relic of Nor-

man rule. It was inaugurated through the efforts of Roger, Duke of Calabria and Apulia—the son of the famous Robert Guiscard. Turned into a stable by the Turks after the sack of the town, bombarded and pillaged time after time, it has preserved, of all its decorations, only the marvelous mosaic with which it is paved. Inscriptions, still legible, tell how this mosaic was executed by a certain Pantaleone by the order of an Archbishop Jonathas, at the end of the twelfth century. It represents a colossal tree running from the door of the church to the foot of the chief altar—a many-branched, leafy tree, bearing on its motionless boughs mysterious fruits, which are human figures. These figures represent Adam and Eve, Alexander and Noah, Cain and Abel, Samson and King Arthur. The signs of the zodiac are there, also, as well as the months of the year; each symbolized by the labors appropriate to it. This strange and gigantic vegetation of images symbolizing the fruits of history and of nature, accompanies, too, the steps of the officiating priest who, as he walks to the altar, treads underfoot all the glory of the ages and of the world. The mystic branches lengthen out and wind among twelve large columns of green

marble, whose capitals, ornamented with impious emblems, were torn from a pagan temple. The legend says that it was a temple of Minerva. To complete the strong mediæval impression, on descending into the crypt supported by forty-two columns, of ancient temples also—trophies of paganism held in subjection, as it were, by the new God—I perceive near the door, just as I am about to leave the crypt, one of the most tragic tombs I have ever beheld. The statue of a bishop in pontifical robes half leans out of the wall. His muscular hand, on which gleams the pastoral ring, is raised in benediction, and below, rigid, with hollow features, the nose pinched in death, the same bishop lies clad in a monk's robe. On one side is inscribed an epitaph of so stern, so eloquent a conciseness, that it might be the epitaph, not of a man, only, but of the city itself, of a nation, of the whole human race, symbolized in the many-colored mosaic which winds around the base of the marble columns:

Decipimur votis. Tradunt nos tempora. Sed mors
Delenit curas. Anxia vita nihil.*

* We are disappointed in our hopes. Time cheats us, but death
Soothes all suffering. Care-burdened life is nothing.

XXII.

LECCE, November 24.

THE little city of Manduria is a very old and venerable town, before whose walls the Tarentines fought in the year 338 before our era, and whose ramparts, contemporary with the first Greek colonists, I went yesterday to visit. These walls are built according to the system styled Pelasgian—of blocks placed one above the other without cement. I cannot say whether they belong to the second or third system of construction, as the books express it; but I know that the wide circuit, partly in ruins, of these gray stones piled to a height of three or four meters, in the midst of the vast plain, powerfully affects the imagination. How long ago they lived, the barbarous and yet skillful workmen who cut and set in their places these stones! Euripides, in his day, attributed similar constructions to the fabled Cyclops, adding that they had for tools the lever, the rule, and the hammer; and Lucretius, speaking of these primitive races, characterizes them in the following vigorous lines,

brought irresistibly to my mind by the sight of this structure, and for the translation of which I ask the reader's indulgence :

At genus humanum multo fuit illud in arvis
Durius, ut decuit, tellus quod dura creasset,
Et majoribus et solidis magis ossibus intus
Fundatum et validis aptum per viscera nervis.*

It is a pity that these walls should be left at the mercy of the peasants who, for centuries past, have hewn the stone and used it at will for their needs ; and yet, to prevent these depredations, it would suffice to place them on the list of national monuments, as it would suffice to preserve the marvelous mosaic of the cathedral of Otranto from a wear which defaces it to place over it a movable wooden pavement, as has been done, and justly, for the mosaics of Beccafumi, in the cathedral of Sienna. This, at least, is what M. Guiseppe Gigli, a distinguished poet of this province, has told me, speaking of these Cyclopean walls. He accompanied me as my guide to the fortress of Oria, constructed by Frederick II., distant an hour's journey from Otranto.

* Those men, rude children of a rude soil,
Wandered in the land, taller of stature,
And their rugged frames, built of larger bones
And stronger, were bound by firmer muscles.

I am almost consoled for not having pushed on to Castel del Monte, which Gregorovius affirms to be the masterpiece of Suabian architecture in Apulia, by the view of this castle. In the exterior of the building not a stone is wanting. The two round towers at one end of the structure, of exquisite delicacy of form, harmonize well with the lightness of the whole building, whose other extremity is shaped like a ship's prow! In the re-entering angles are serrated balconies. The castle has a curiously wrought crenelated roof, and this gigantic gem of stone has for its setting a garden which stretches along the base of the towers and the walls. As I walked in it I called to mind the pleasant vineyards of the Rhine, rising in terraces at the foot of some Schloss, and those alleys which remain forever in the memory once one has wandered through them, inhaling the fragrance of the lindens in bloom. But although this was an Italian autumn, still it was autumn, and the walks of the garden of Oria, instead of fragrant lindens, were planted with gloomy cypresses—a moving black curtain through which I caught glimpses of the vast fertile plain. On the bushes trembled the fragile November roses, which have no perfume, and whose petals the

first chill blast from the north will scatter. Other autumn flowers shivered in the breeze in the flower-beds, mingled with green plants ; among them, to supply the perfume wanting in the roses, that garden mint, with so pungent an odor, which the Italians call by the pretty name of " Louise herb." What a spot in which to sit in the sunlight, no longer burning, but tender and melancholy, like that of a French September, and to remember, as the poet says :

All that existence has of secret bitterness !

But I have not come here to give myself up to the demon of reverie, always floating in the mists of autumn ; and so, as becomes a conscientious tourist, I enter into a conversation with my guide on the superstitions and the popular poetry of this land, which his words people for me with smiling or gloomy images. He was born and grew up in Manduria, in the old house in which he lives, and which his excavations will one day make a museum of local medals and terra cotta statuettes discovered among the débris of the tombs. He has the good sense not to leave it, and in the brochures already published * there are notes

* I shall cite, in particular, the curious passage entitled, " Superstizioni, Pregiudizi, Credenze, e Fiabe popolari nella terra d'Otranto,

enough, taken on the spot, to furnish abundant material to students of the customs of peoples, who desire to translate into scientific demonstrations the line of Sainte-Beuve :

Paganisme immortel, es tu mort ?

This line came to my mind a few days ago when I arrived in sunny Bari carelessly seated on the shore of the blue sea. It came back to me again, as my host related from memory some of the singular traditions which still survive here. They show so transparently the naturalism of their remote origin. When, for example, the laborers see the sun sinking below the horizon, they stop working and, kneeling in a semicircle before the sinking orb, they chant a prayer. The words may have changed but it is still Phœbus Apollo, the archer of antiquity, who shoots his deadly arrows during the canicular months, that these simple hearts adore, the lares of antiquity whom they fear, under the form of a spirit, still called Lauro. This Lauro is a little dwarf, thirty or forty centimeters in height, with a swarthy complexion and curly hair which he covers with a Calabrian hat, and the velvet of his robe gleams with a fantastic

saggio storico. (Lecce, 1889.) The charming tale of "The King's Bride" is there reproduced entire.

light. With all this he is capricious, full of likes and dislikes equally inexplicable; he asks you what you wish, you answer: "A sack of money." He brings you a sack of green pea pods. You are cunning enough to ask him for a sack of green pea pods, and he brings you money. This is the Lauro who causes such or such a stupid peasant to pine away, who braids in a whimsical fashion the manes of the wagoner's horses, who makes the plates fall from the hands of the awkward housewife and breaks the crockery of the poor household. All the *contadini* between Gallipoli and Lecce swear that they have met him, or, at least, that they have heard him trotting about the house with his nimble step. It is the individual to whom he becomes attached, not the place. Change your habitation, he will follow you faithfully. A farmer's wife, tormented by one of these malicious spirits, quitted her farm for another. She set to work to unpack her furniture. Fancy how she felt to see beside her the Lauro, slyly aiding her to raise a heavy soup tureen.

Among the other deities whose secret influence is still feared, although their attributes have remained almost unchanged, must naturally be counted the ancient wood nymphs, the

faunesses, the companions of the fauns become fairies. They preside over the blossoming of the trees, as well as over the murmuring fountains, as dryads and nymphs. There is especially the Orco, *nanni nerco*, in whose name reappears the antique Orcus, son of Erys and avenger of the Eumenides, a shadowy personage who has come to represent all the powers of Hades.

. . . Minos sedet arbiter Orci.

And necessarily, too, in this peninsula, girdled on all sides by a softly murmuring sea, blue as beautiful eyes, undulating as silken locks, dangerous as false love, the sirens have survived with their legend in which is incarnated the supple grace of the wave, its fatal charm and its mystery. These voluptuous and redoubtable sirens are as living as in the time when Homer described Ulysses bound to the mast and allowing himself with impunity to be intoxicated with their songs, thanks to this ruse. I cannot resist the pleasure of giving here a résumé of the tales about those seductive Delilahs of the sea, collected by my companion on this visit to the castle of Oria. It will be seen from it that those cruel inhabitants of the waters play by instinct the rôle of benefi-

cent goddesses. It is called "The King's Bride," and it is the history of a young girl of eighteen, who had, as is meet for the heroine of a popular legend, eyes the color of the waves and hair the color of the sun. Her mother left her, on her deathbed, to the care of a friend, herself the mother of a girl of the same age, but who was all ugly and crooked, with eyes light as those of a cat and hair black and bristly like that of a sorceress. It happened that, passing through the village, a high and mighty king saw the poor orphan. He fell desperately in love with her and resolved to marry her, to the rage of her guardian who, wishing to avenge herself for the king's preference of the beautiful girl to her own daughter, invented one of those stratagems, a very simple one in this case, common to the villains of fairy tales: "Your Majesty," she said to the king, on the wedding night, "I took your bride into my house when she was poor and forsaken. In return I ask you a favor. I wish neither gold, nor jewels, nor titles. Grant only that my daughter and I may be the only ones allowed to sit in the carriage of your future queen. Alas, it is the last time that our humble station will permit us to take our place beside her."

The king answered: "Your request is granted," and the cortége proceeded on its way—the bridegroom at the head, on horseback, the bride following with the two women, in the chariot of state. After a short time they all arrived at a castle, which glowed in the light of the setting sun.

"Look," said the king, calling his bride by name, "this castle is ours, and here we will spend in the cool shade the long months of summer."

As the noise of the wheels prevented the young girl from hearing clearly, she asked:

"What does the king say?"

"He says," answered the mother of the ugly girl, "that my daughter and you are to change clothes."

The bride thought to herself that this was a strange caprice, but the will of her lord being sacred to her, she obeyed. After an hour the caravan entered a thick forest. The king, turning again to his bride, said:

"Look, look at this fine wood. We will come here to hunt the hare and the wild boar."

"What does he say?" again asked the young girl.

"He says," answered the bad woman, "that

you must give my daughter your jewels, your necklace, and your royal crown glittering with rare and precious stones."

The bride smiled this time and obeyed. They went on for another hour, their way lying now along the seashore. The wind began to blow. Night was falling. Heavy clouds announced a storm.

"Queen, my queen," said the king, turning around for the third time, "behold that sea. We will embark on it, you and I, in my royal vessel."

"What does the king say?" the bride asked her perfidious companions.

"He says that you are to cast yourself into the sea."

The noise of a falling body was heard. The unfortunate girl had thrown herself into the sea. "But," the legend judiciously adds, "she did not die, for she was beautiful and good and deserved to be rewarded and not punished for her obedience." In parenthesis it may be said that this passive obedience of the wife would of itself reveal the proximity of the Oriental world, and is only a trait of local manners, interpreted with the fancifulness of a popular tale. It is, indeed, this peculiarity which has induced me to tran-

scribe the dialogue as it is set down in M. Gigli's brochure. Not to enter too minutely into details, and at the same time that the reader may be reassured as to the fate of this too exemplary bride, be it known that the Sirens rescued her from the waves and took her to the palace of their common mother at the bottom of the sea. The king, on arriving at his capital, saw with terror the sudden metamorphosis that had taken place in the girl he was about to marry. He attributed the change to some maleficent spell. Filled with melancholy he was walking along the shore when he heard a voice, murmuring in the waves, which related to him the whole story. The voice added that, to obtain the return of his bride, he must—I give the rest of the story in the words of the story-teller, who must be responsible for this curious ending—"cause to be thrown into the sea *a vast quantity of wine, cheese, and bread* with which to satiate the Sirens and their prisoners, who have not eaten for so long and who exceed in numbers the inhabitants of the earth."

Truly, the stroke of the fairy wand is an unexpected one which transforms these perfidious devourers of men into keepers of an ordinary for the shipwrecked. Unfortu-

nately other superstitions are here which are less innocent, and which have given rise to dangerous practices. I allude to those relating to treasures. "I was having," says M. Gigli, "some excavations made in a piece of land belonging to me, close by the celebrated fountain mentioned by Pliny, and which is never seen to rise or fall below a certain level. I was superintending the work when several peasants called me aside to inform me that there was on this ground a deep well communicating with the fountain. They added that in this well was a treasure, consisting of a large sitting hen with eleven chicks, all of solid gold and of enormous weight. They had positive knowledge of the fact, having heard it, when they were children, from their parents. But I could discover this treasure only on condition of casting into the well a boy or girl of five, unless there could be found an *enceinte* woman who would consent to allow a serpent to rest on her naked breast during the entire time of the search. At the very instant in which the treasure was reached the serpent would disappear by magic." Evidently the idea of an expiatory sacrifice, and that of the discovery of a sum of money, are intimately and constantly associ-

ated together in the imagination of primitive peoples. "At the farm of San Domenico, which belongs to the Marquis of Ayala-Valva," added my guide, "there is a treasure guarded by a demon. But before taking possession of it, a ditch must be filled with a quantity of human blood sufficient to drown a calf."

Who would ever suppose that the broad and smiling landscape, overlooked by the peaceful garden of Oria, could ever be the scene of rites so unholy. I prefer to forget them and to question my informant, rather, regarding less sinister beliefs, that, for example, which declares that a player is always sure of winning if he keeps in his purse a lizard with two tails—or others more pleasing to the imagination, as the following method practiced to conjure away a storm. When clouds gather in the sky, the women bring out into the street a little boy or girl of seven, and the child sings—throwing down three pieces of bread, one to the right, one to the left, and one in front of him :

Ozili, San Giuanni, e no durmiri,
Ca sta vescu tre nueli viniri,
Una d'acqua, una di jentu, una di malitiempu.
Du lu portamo stu malitiempu ?

Sotto' a na grotta scura,
 Do no canta jaddu,
 Do no luci luna
 Cu no fazza mali a me, e a nudda creatura ! *

I asked my companion to recite to me also the touching popular song in the Mandurian dialect, sung to the accompaniment of the tambourine, which cures those stung by the tarantula or consumed by an unrequited love :

Malinconicu cantu, e allegru mai.
 Cacciati forà sti malincunii.
 Comu l'aggiu a cacciari, quannu tu sai ?
 Ai nu cori e lu donai a ti. †

The *u* abounds in these verses as in the Sicilian romances, that *u* pronounced like *ou* which deadens and smothers the sound. The cadence is slow and plaintive, like the *tango* and *petenera* of Andalusia. These popular songs

* Rise, St. John, and do not sleep—
 Three black clouds are coming from below,
 One of water, one of wind, and one of storm.
 Whither shall we bear away the storm ?
 To a dark grotto where no cock crows,
 Where never a moonbeam finds its way,
 So that it may harm neither me nor any other creature !

† Melancholy song and never gay,
 Will it drive from me this melancholy ?
 Ah ! how canst thou think it could, knowing what thou dost ?
 I had a heart and I have given it to thee.

of the extreme south of Italy produce an impression almost identical with that of the mournful religious hymns in the Jewish ceremonies. The Orient slumbers under these *cantilenas*—the vast, impenetrable Orient with the melancholy and the mirages of its deserts. A strain of Arab blood has remained here mingled with the blood of the old Hellenes, and I fancy I can see, leaning over the balcony of the castle, with his enigmatic smile, the sacrilegious emperor who constructed it. This skeptical and subtle Frederick II. seems to have divined so well what our modern scientists comprehend more clearly—the innumerable threads which heredity inextricably weaves into our being, so that in the sincere Christians of to-day their pagan ancestors, and other ancestors of still darker beliefs, live again. And Christian, pagan, or Mohammedan, in the sunny plains of the South, as among the mists of the North, the poor human soul is always that dream-violin which, at the touch of life, gives forth that inconsolable plaint, that melancholy song which cannot become gay :

Malinconicu cantu, e allegro mai.

XXIII.

TARENTUM, November 26.

“I LIE far from the land of Italy and from Tarentum, my country, and this is more bitter to me than death.” Who speaks thus, with a sobriety of mourning more touching than the longest elegy? One of the poets of that divine “Anthology,” a few verses of which one ought to read every morning to cast a charm over the whole day—as a lover reads over and over again a letter of his absent mistress. This poet is called Leonidas, and he emigrated to Greece when the city was taken by the cruel Consul Pacuvius. This exile had before his eyes the Acropolis of Athens, then intact and surmounted by the imposing statue of Pallas, the blue sky of Attica, her picturesque ranges of mountains and, if he chose to vary the scene of his exile, the luxurious cities of Asia, remote and mysterious Egypt, the vast Orient were open to him. But his thoughts turned to Tarentum, seated between the great basin of salt water, that inland lake which is still called the *mare piccolo*,

and the vast, the billowy Ionian sea. This was, in part, because the Tarentum of two thousand two hundred years ago, the third century before the Christian era* was the seat of splendor and refinement, with its theaters and its horse races; its delicate banquets supplied by this inland sea so rich in fish; its courtesans, black and white, from Sicily and Africa; its purple stuffs, its cool climate always refreshed by a breeze. Countless statues peopled its temples, and silver flowed into its port in such abundance that after it was taken the precious metals immediately fell in value in the Roman market. Founded by a handful of bastard Lacedemonians, it owed its preponderance over the other colonies of Magna Græcia to the influence of one of these philosopher-legislators, of whom there were so many at that time, the celebrated Archytas. Such men are as much an enigma to us as are certain artists of the Italian Renaissance—a Leonardo for instance, in whom faculties, that seem to us altogether dissimilar, complete instead of injuring each other. Thus da Vinci, who, by the most scientific analysis acquired superiority in form, does he not remain a mystery equally with those metaphysicians,

* 272 B. C.

who, by the most abstruse reasoning, acquired consummate skill in the management of political forces? France, also, to her cost, has had her philosopher-politicians—a Rousseau, a Proudhon, and others. We know to what an odious and useless subversion of order the teachings of these proud geniuses led. A Pythagoras, on the contrary, and an Archytas, made a practical application of their idealogy and the result has proved how greatly their value as men of action was enhanced by their value as men of thought. They wrought, too, on the most subtle material that ever existed, that Hellenic humanity compared with which, with all our progress, we are only barbarians. This was because slavery had solved the social problem of that age. It must, however, be said that the results of their beneficent efforts did not long endure. Eternal Nemesis did not spare their work any more than themselves. Pythagoras lived to see his disciples proscribed and massacred. Retiring from Crotona, he died of grief at Metapontum. Archytas was no sooner dead than the prosperity which he had bestowed upon his native city degenerating into luxury, Tarentum lost her power to defend herself. She began to call to her aid foreign soldiers, the king of

Epirus, among them, and for the first time she was conquered by the Romans, under Pacuvius. She thought to regain her freedom by proclaiming Hannibal. But this great man was forced to quit Italy, recalled to Africa by the danger of Carthage, and the venerable Fabius, charged with the chastisement of rebellious Tarentum, subjected it to one of those systematic pillages practiced by the Romans. Thirty thousand citizens sold as slaves, bushels of coins sent to Rome—those beautiful coins which bear the image of Taras, the son of Neptune, the fabled founder of the city, brandishing the trident and bestriding a dolphin—all the temples despoiled of their statues—the expiation was final and terrible. The superstitious general respected only the images of those deities who were represented in attitudes expressive of rage—a Jupiter, no doubt, launching a thunderbolt; an Apollo piercing the Niobides with his arrows; a Perseus slaying the Gorgon; a Hercules throwing to the ground the Amazon, and crushing with his brutal foot the delicate foot of the beautiful and fragile warrior; a Pallas, holding the ægis. He expressed his will in a phrase of such concise and tragic eloquence, as only the ancients knew how to employ. “Let us leave

to the Tarentines," he said, "the angry Gods."

And yet, after all these trials, the luxurious Tarentum, to which the thoughts of the exile mournfully turned, offered so peaceful and delightful an asylum that the Epicurean Horace and the tender Virgil made it the scene, the one of his dream of spiritual selfishness, the other of his ideal of a melancholy retreat in the midst of an idyllic landscape. "More than any spot on earth—this seaside retreat attracts me," sings the one, and the other: "I remember at the foot of the tower of lofty Tarentum—on the banks of the dark Galesus that flows through yellow fields—I saw an old man, the possessor of but a few acres—of waste land unfruitful in flocks,—unpropitious to wheat and unfavorable to the vine.—He, however, cultivated there rare vegetables, and all around—white lilies grew, mingled with vervain and wild poppies.—No king was happier than he.—When spring came was he not the first to gather the roses?" With what reason Dante chose him for his guide in his mystic journey, this gentle, plaintive Virgil! Both had the same passionate love for their native land. They were great Italians, wounded to the

heart by the misery of this country, created for happiness but which has suffered so deeply. They have made celebrated its most insignificant spots. Passing through Tuscany I saw everywhere some line of the "Divina Commedia" adorning like a triumphal or mourning crown the gates of the little towns; and passages of the "Georgics" or the "Æneid" still adorn with imperishable verse the ruined towns of this extremity of Italy. And yet how far it is from Mantua, how far from that lake of Garda walled in by the red mountains, whose blue waters—of a blue like the blue of a glacier—send forth when lashed by the wind—called here by the almost Latin name of *Ora*—a roar like that of the sea:

Fluctibus et fremitu resonans, Benace, marino!

Yes, fallen indeed! For this modern Tarentum, to which I have just made so long a visit, has not even that charm of hopeless decay which makes of Otranto, for instance, a never-to-be-forgotten ruin of past splendor. A complete ruin has so much grandeur! Those who have visited the extremity of Sicily which faces Carthage will remember the little hill of Selinonte, and the majesty of those temples, overthrown, as by a breath, by

the earthquake, in their utter ruin, a majesty which they did not in truth possess, even when their gigantic columns frowned upon that African sea across which sailed the Punic galleys. The greatest downfall of a city, as of a man, is to survive its own greatness. Crowded on an islet which served the ancient town as a citadel, modern Tarentum is composed of mean houses among which run streets as narrow as the narrowest *calle* of Venice. The native population, emaciated with fevers, wasted by skin diseases, subsisting as they do on fish and seaweed, present no single trait in which we can trace the graceful type of the delicately molded terra cotta statuettes made here. Even the corner of the wharf where these sea-products, famous throughout the kingdom of Naples, are retailed does not present that spectacle of activity which makes the water-front at Marseilles a *sofatare*, a scene of busy popular life. Nor is this *mare piccolo*, this inland sea that surrounds the islet on which the city is built, to be compared to the lake of Berre or the roadstead of Cadiz, or, to take a nearer example, to that of Syracuse. The hills that shut it in describe a curve which is neither beautiful nor grand. Bristling with the stakes

which dot it with black points, marking the sites of beds of oysters and shell fish, the lake has not the aspect of a harbor. At least it had not that aspect under the low sky which bent over it when I saw it, lashed by a bitter wind which dashed the green waves against the hull of the single man-of-war lying there at anchor. The color of the light is to seaside scenery what the acoustics of a hall is to music. The scene changes, it grows animated, it becomes melancholy or gay, according to the hour, the weather, the wind that blows. On my next visit I shall perhaps see Tarentum with other eyes. For this time let it suffice to say that my disappointment was great.

If I should ever venture to make this second visit, will the courageous archæologists engaged in the search for the monuments of Greek Tarentum have been more fortunate in their patient labors? Up to the present time, only two Doric columns covered with plaster have been discovered in this acropolis which, from the treasures of art it contained, was one of the glories of Magna Græcia. And one side of these columns had been cut off to fit it into the building. They are contained, in fact, in a convent where they played a merely

useful rôle. This modest rôle has preserved them, however, as has been the case with the columns of the temple of Minerva at Syracuse, which are still to be seen, imprisoned, in the cathedral, with their regular flutings and the severe coussinets of their capitals. Only at Syracuse the whole temple was surrounded with these pillars, and its architecture is also perfectly recognizable, while the two imprisoned columns at Tarentum tell nothing of the edifice of which they were a part. With the exception of these columns and the fragments of old marble and terra cotta, in the three halls dignified by the name of museum, these are the only traces of art that remain, after so many centuries of splendor, on this famous hill. It is true that one of these fragments of marble, a mutilated head of a goddess—a Proserpine, or a Venus—is admirable for its expression of melancholy and puissant sensuality, and some of the other little heads, broken off from funeral statues, are charming, worthy of their sisters of Tanagra, by becoming touches to the hair and coquettish smiles which bring to the mind a whole universe of pretty feminine graces. It is true, also, that half a score of the vases found in the recent excavations are decorated with

paintings of rare perfection. One of them, a *lekithos* on which is depicted a parting scene, the leave-taking between a father and son, radiates a beauty at once moral and physical. The figure of the horse which a slave has just brought is executed as perfectly as that of the Emperor Constantine in Raphael's fresco. It brings to mind those magnificent animals which rear in the sacred frieze of the Temple, that is to say the Parthenon, in the cavalcade of the Panathenians. The attitudes of the figures reveal an exquisite feeling for the pathetic. It is all simple, all homelike, and yet so grand.

In this consists the secret of Greek art, in the power of giving the essential and unique stroke which endows a work with life, and at once stamps it as an eternal type. In spite of the parodies of the schools, in spite of the pedantic declamations of the professors, and in spite of the prejudices, no less dogmatic, of modern reactionaries—those doctrinaires on the opposite side, no less conventional in their pedantry of negation—when this Greek art appears, were it only in some imperfect, second-rate specimen, it takes possession of you as the sun takes possession of your eyes. Its superiority is so manifest that this little suffices to

justify, in its discreditable meaning, the name of barbarians given by the Greeks to every people but themselves.

They came here, these barbarians, who destroyed so much delicate and refined civilization, chiefly from across the seas. Oh, irony of fable! For this sea brought also to the antique world the Goddess of Beauty, that Aphrodite, whom the Florentine Botticelli shows us borne by the winds that scatter flowers over her as she stands in her shell, young, delicate, bewitching, with a charm of which she is not yet conscious. It was toward this sea—the great sea—that I bent my steps on leaving the Museum. The palaces that line a portion of the quay in this quarter give at least an impression more worthy of the name the city bears. When I arrived at this quay the sky, still cloudy, tinged the billows with a violet hue, and the coast of the Basilicata which incloses the immense gulf stood out, a pale violet line between the leaden sky and the black waters. Before me rose two islands, the Chœrades of the ancients, now called St. Peter and St. Paul, and imagination evoked some of those who had gazed with eyes now closed forever on that same horizon—which has not changed with the changing fortunes of the

city. I saw again its citizens assembled at the theater. I saw again the Carthaginian Hannibal scanning with his glance this vast extent of waters, at the end of his campaign. What fury must have shaken this great adventurer—a fury more violent than that of the waves themselves—at the thought that these waves would roll on forever yet never bring him to Rome, since he had once missed it. I see again the Saracens of 927 and their disembarkation, in consequence of which Tarentum remained for forty years abandoned. They had literally torn down every house and killed every inhabitant. And before my mind passed in strange procession a score of other figures; the Byzantines re-entering the city, under Nicephorus Phocas; the Germans under Otho II., then Roger's Normans; then again the Saracens under Frederick II., and Manfred, who bore the title of Prince of Tarentum; then the Angevines, then the Spaniards; then the French, and among the latter, by a singular contrast of fate, a general of artillery who came to join the garrison and to die here in 1803; this officer of Bonaparte was no other than Choderlos de Laclos, the most pitiless of the vivisectors of love, the author of "*Liaisons Dangereuses*," the

best specimen, perhaps, of the analytical novel.

What an enigmatic and complex figure is that of this man of doubtful, almost criminal reputation ; and why is it that, chancing to think of his strange end, his death on this remote shore, I cannot dismiss it from my mind ? It is because the contradictory facts of his life place him in that category of indefinable geniuses, whose moral nature irritates, because it puzzles us. Before the Revolution he was already an officer in garrison at Grenoble, and there he wrote, at the very time when Beyle was born, this singular book, which cannot for an instant be ranked in the same category, notwithstanding five or six licentious incidents, as the *badinages* of Crebillon or the vulgar "Faublas." Like a painter, whom a patron of art should engage to paint a picture for a private museum, and who, irresistibly impelled by his genius, should execute, in spite of himself, a tragic work, Laclos wished, no doubt, in composing his "Liaisons," to vie with the storytellers then in vogue, and he has drawn the darkest picture of moral anatomy that any psychologist has ever dared to depict. With that clear vision of the great moralist, conscience—which works within us, in spite of

us, when we possess it, or, rather, when it possesses us—this *débutant* discerned and defined, by a decisive stroke, what was the mortal wound, the fatal malady of the eighteenth century, just before it came to an end with the scaffolds of Robespierre—cruelty in love. He has, at the same time, recognized its two principal causes—apathy, and the abuse of the intellect. He created, to incarnate these two vices, the *Marchioness of Merteuil* and *Valmont*; two characters so typical, so clearly portrayed, so daringly and so skillfully dissected, as to be appalling. To comprehend evil to this degree is almost to become an accomplice in it; at least for unsophisticated readers, who do not comprehend what a great intellect is. The moral audacity of the book has contributed more to its reputation as an immoral work than its material audacity, which does not overstep the limits of decorum, except in a few passages—and these are scarcely intelligible to the uninitiated—such as are allowable from the moment when one undertakes to analyze the passion of love. It is a literary charge which should be withdrawn; for if the book is dangerous, like all books in which the passions are too profoundly analyzed, it is not, it could not be immoral. We

are too prone to confound these terms and to believe that the influence of a work is only in the work. If there are immoral books which corrupt us, there are also many moral books by which we corrupt ourselves. Morality is but the practical expression of the laws of spiritual life, and when one who has the genius of Laclos perceives this spiritual life, even if he did not wish it, he is moral because he cannot help enunciating these laws. It has not been sufficiently observed with what an avenging logic the two wicked characters of the story—the *Marchioness* and *Valmont*—are led, drawn on, as it were, to hate, to destroy each other. *Valmont*, believing that he has complete mastery over himself, falls in love with *Mme. de Tourvel*, breaking her heart, however, with his cruelty. A fierce jealousy of *Mme. de Tourvel* crazes the *Marchioness*, making her commit the greatest indiscretions in order to injure her rival, and avenge herself for this indescribable humiliation. And what is this woman, this tender and unfortunate *présidente*, who triumphs over the wickedness of these two wretches by thus dying of it, alas ! but a sweet and gentle woman who loves sincerely, and who gives herself to him she loves ? It was already much to have written,

in this unique book, the sentimental testament, if we may say so, of a whole society. Laclos, as a novelist, accomplished nothing further. We meet him again during the Revolution, a familiar guest at the Royal Palace, the confidant of the Duke of Orleans, and a confidant who was also a guide, a counselor in ambitions and intrigues, who dreamed, perhaps, of becoming the Warwick of a king made by him and for him.

It is always curious and interesting to see great theoretical psychologists pass from thought to action. How must it be when the action is of this nature, at once mysterious and terrible, mixed with the most sanguinary drama of modern history? How one would have wished that the pen that wrote "*Liaisons*" had traced the history of these intrigues and the portraits of the heroes of '90 with the same surety of touch with which it traced the heroes of '80, who preluded by the infamies of the heart the infamies of politics! How one would have wished to know, too, what thoughts passed through the mind of this observer as he walked on the rock of Tarentum—this observer, disenchanted with life at thirty, who, having taken service again under Bonaparte, disposed his

batteries on the fort whose towers I can now see looming up in the darkness of approaching night? And the sea calls with mysterious voice, as she has called through countless ages, to the innumerable sojourners, of an hour or of years, whom fate has led to this rock, so regretted by its poet: "Far from Tarentum, and that is more bitter to me than death!"

XXIV.

TARENTUM, November 28.

AFTER the little museum has been visited twice, and twice also the narrow streets of the old city, what is there to do at Tarentum when one is neither a naval engineer nor a collector of shells? François Lenormant who, as happens to professional travelers, replaces, in this case, description by information, states in his *Magna Græcia* that the *mare piccolo* incloses in its six leagues of circumference ninety-six distinct species of fishes. "As for the shells," he adds with the enthusiasm of a neophyte, "the catalogue numbers one hundred and fifty varieties of mollusks and echinoderms!" In addition, the Italian government, desirous of giving the country a navy worthy of its extensive coast line, has greatly improved the fine natural harbor formed by this inland sea.

The island on which are clustered the unhealthy houses of Tarentum—formerly a peninsula, but artificially separated from the mainland—has been lately still further sep-

arated. A narrow channel, as deep as an arm of the sea, and spanned by a draw-bridge which, when open, gives passage to the tallest ships, has been excavated. Beyond this bridge the building of a new city, with tall houses and broad streets, had even been commenced. But all is now lifeless and unfinished. One receives the impression of a work hastily undertaken with the determination to complete it with all speed; then partially abandoned, doubtless for lack of sufficient resources. There is an incongruity so great as to be almost laughable between this attempt at modern renovation and the signs on the shops, which all bear traces of a veneration for the past. You will find in this new Tarentum cafés dedicated to Archytas, beer-shops with the sign *del Peripato*! Why was there none of this veneration for the past in the last century, for the relics of the Middle Ages, since the relics of antiquity had disappeared? The beautiful Norman cathedral dedicated to St. Cataldo, the Irish apostle to this country, would not in that case have been desecrated by the repairs and the plastering which render it unrecognizable. The best thing to be done, then, is to make but a short stay here, and to avail one's self meanwhile

of the tolerably good hotel to make a few easy excursions, to the Castle of Oria for instance, to Manduria, and, especially, to Metapontum.

I returned to-day from this latter city, or rather from the station thus called. Even more than Tarentum, Metapontum is only a memory, and the classic *etiam periere ruinæ* which we made such an abuse of in our Latin verses at college is here implacably true. Metapontum ! This name evokes the memory of Pythagoras, who came here to die ; it brings to mind, too, the remembrance of the richest culture, symbolized by the beautiful wheat-ear on the stamped coins struck under the ancient republic—an ear of miraculous harvests, so graceful, so large, so full of grains. In regard to this ancient image this is the actual reality ! Scarcely does the train leave Tarentum than a plain stretches before the eye, vast, boundless, and solitary. Solitary, too, are the sandy downs bordering the road over which the sea rolls its gray waters with monotonous murmur. Rivers cross this solitude on their way to this sea. Rivers ? No ; beds of pebbles dried by the heat of the past summer, where a yellowish water stagnates rather than flows. It is the realm of malaria, of that dev-

astating scourge symbolized, say certain mythologists, by the monsters of the fables of antiquity—hydras, dragons, or simple brigands vanquished by the gods. The fabulous monster in this case would be Abybas, the fabled founder of Metapontum, sinister hero who encountered Hercules as he was driving the oxen of Geryon through Italy.

Was Abybas the host or the victim of the great executor of justice? On this point commentators differ, although they agree, according to Lenormant, in deriving the name of Metapontum from Metabos, the name of the son of this Abybas—the child who was born after the passage of the oxen. What is certain is that at the time of the Sicilian war, the rich town of Metapontum lent efficient aid to the Athenian general in men, money, and provisions. To-day it has no existence, save in nine letters painted on the sign of a railway station! This station, however, is of considerable importance, since travelers coming from Naples stop here to take the train for Reggio on the one side, for Tarentum and Brindisi on the other. Around the railway buildings cluster some six or seven mean houses. They serve to lodge the families of the employees; and these houses must

often change tenants, to judge from the faces of those who examine the tickets and check the baggage—faces of a greenish hue, lighted by eyes of an intense black in which the fire of fever burns. The insidious germ of the poison, against which the foliage of the great eucalyptus trees is powerless, runs through their exhausted veins. The more recent arrivals may be recognized by the comparative freshness of their complexions and clearness of their eyes. The fatal hue of death is not so marked in them. But what is to be done? The man is married. He has responsibilities. He needs money. The pay is better. Such a one has been there and has not succumbed. Precautions must be taken; he will take them. The miserable family accept the offered position, and after a few years the demon of fever has done his work. They are all dead or dying. It would seem as if Hercules, the genius of labor, instead of passing through this plain to render it, as before, prosperous and habitable, performs in it the office of an executioner, and thus avenges himself on the new god whose worship has succeeded to his own.

The only interest an excursion to this fatal country offers is a visit to the remains of a

Doric temple, of uncertain purpose, situated, it is supposed, some two miles to the north of the vanished city. This ruin bears the romantic name of "The Table of the Paladins—Tavola dei Paladini." "They call it so," said the peasant who served as my guide to the ruin, "because the old people say that men six times as tall as you came there to eat." He winks and, nodding his head, utters the national phrase, *par excellence*, which lends itself equally to the grossest superstitions and to the most diplomatic skepticism: "*Chi lo sa?*" and he adds: "Their tombs have been discovered, however, and they were made for people like you and me." This argument appears greatly to trouble his intelligence, as slow as the wooden cart without springs in which he drives me. This cart is drawn by two consumptive mules harnessed, the one to the shaft, the other to the side of the vehicle. The two large wheels move in the two ruts of the road, in which they sometimes sink up to the middle. The landscape is still more desolate now that I am at a distance of five hundred yards or more from the buildings grouped around the station, and they are concealed by a turn of the road. The plain stretches away, wild and bare. Sheep browse

upon it, guarded by a shepherd clad in the skins of animals, shapeless and seamless. These yellowish-white skins, stained with mud, are tied with strings around the body, the arms, and the legs of the shepherd, probably very similar to those who served the enchanting Theocritus as a theme, although we cannot imagine a human animal, as brutish as this one, reciting the delightful verses of the "Cyclops":

Nicias, there is no remedy for love.
There is no healing balm, no magic potion
To soothe its fierce burning,
But the pure spell of the Muses.

The shepherd, seated on the ground, gazes at the mountains of Calabria, whose shadowy blue outlines and snow-capped summits bound the desolate scene. How far away they are, and how far away is the sea which shimmers to the right! An autumnal sky, in which ragged clouds scud before the wind, roofs this solitude where birds of prey are flying. They hover with outspread wings, searching the wide plain with eager glance, and the timid larks, startled by the dogs that follow the cart—Regina, Cacciatore, and Polycastro—soar into air to alight, a moment after, a little distance off. Jolt follows jolt, and as we

proceed the columns of the ruined temple grow larger, but larger, too, grows the wretched cemetery wall with which a stupid precaution has surrounded them. It would be so easy to replace by a railing this absurd masonry, which would spoil, if it were possible, the beauty of this ruin, so melancholy and so grand in its setting of silence and desolation.

But no, the beauty of the ruin is the greater. Opening the glass door, the impression received from these secular remains is irresistible, instantaneous, and profound. Fifteen columns only remain standing. The emotion they cause, although of a somewhat different nature, is as great as that produced by the edifices, almost intact, of Pæstum. In this case the emotion is chiefly moral. The artist will find less to admire in this ruin of Metapontum than the poet; although it furnishes a perfect specimen of the severe and massive Doric order of architecture, with its absence of ornament, its bare capitals, its base level with the pavement, the sensation it gives is that of a weight simply and intelligently supported. These columns have this peculiarity—that, for greater firmness, the coussinet of the capitals projects slightly. The architrave has not fallen, which explains the name

of table applied to the entire ruin. But it is truly by a miracle that this has not happened. For the vandalism common to both the lords and the peasants of the Middle Ages has performed its work here also. Finding in the stones of antique edifices materials already prepared, they demolished those noble asylums of the exiled gods, as Robinson Crusoe demolished his vessel. Here the stones of the stairs have been torn away as well as those of the wall of the *Cella*. The frontals have been destroyed and, for one not familiar with the unvarying arrangement of the Greek temples, there is nothing to indicate the original design of the building. On the other hand, the most cunning art could not have designed a loftier symbol of the fate that awaits all things human, a more eloquent commentary on the *Debemur morti nos nostraque*. The form of this ruin makes it in truth seem an altar raised to all-conquering Death—the sovereign goddess of this earth—in this desert, which in places takes the vague forms of a necropolis. Undulations in the ground mark the place formerly occupied by the city whose dust is mingled with the soil. It is said that at the time of the harvest, in the cultivated parts of the plain, long rows of

ears of corn, shorter than the rest and prematurely ripened, serve to show where the streets must once have been. It is also said that in the fields newly cleared the plow of the husbandman turns up continually fragments of statues, weapons, and coins.

Tristis arator, is the plaintive expression of the tender Virgil, whom one can fancy one sees, a young man, in the fields of Mantua, observing on the aged countenances of the poor peasants the trace of that unconscious sadness which his precocious genius already divined. This description is only too true of the husbandmen who walk thus, turning up from the infected soil scattered fragments in which may be recognized shadowy monuments of a glory forever vanished ; fragments which are at times marvels of art, as for instance, two marble hands, two adorable marble hands of the statue of a woman, which remain temporarily in a barn near the station while awaiting transportation to the museum at Tarentum. They are so exquisitely molded, these hands found lying among the rubbish, as to make one fall in love with the form which they so delicately terminated ; so pure as to make one kiss them like hands of flesh, and so pitifully mutilated and life-like !

There are also at Metapontum fragments of a temple discovered by the Duke de Luynes, that noble archæologist who has done so much to add to our knowledge of glorious and devastated Magna Græcia. But they are too widely dispersed to teach anything to a traveler who is not a savant. Tombs have also been discovered, but they resemble all other tombs of a similar kind. Therefore I did not expect, when I reached the clump of eucalyptus that conceals the station, to carry from this fatal place any other remembrance than that of the table of the Palladins which stands in the desert. Fortunately the train did not arrive for several hours, in consequence of an accident to one of the bridges on the road. The employees were consequently at leisure, and several of them had gathered around a one-eyed peasant who was playing a guitar; and at the moment of my arrival one of them, a native of Pizzo, taking the guitar, began to sing a Calabrian song of so penetrating a charm that, understanding some of the words, I transcribed them all at his dictation, regretting that I could not send them to the late Claude Larcher to serve as the exergue to his "*Physiologie de l'Amour*," so strangely misinterpreted and cruelly calumniated by

some of my best friends : “ Before the gate of hell—I saw an old man still mourning his beloved.—And I said to him : ‘ Cheer up, poor man—for little by little grief passes away.—Why, the pains of hell are scarcely more than a dream for him who loses his beloved.—And for him who loses her by death, it is nothing ;—for little by little his grief passes away.—But he who loses her living is consumed by a burning fire—which burns more fiercely every day.’ ” And the singer added—by an inspiration, or by a chance use of the words, making a distinction which would have ravished the deceased physiologist : “ It is not a song of love, but of passion ! ”

XXV.

COTRONA, November 30.

ALTHOUGH a great interest, both philosophical and archæological, attaches to ancient Crotona, now by a simple corruption of the language become Cotrona, the little town is at present scarcely visited by anyone but commercial travelers and dealers in lemons and oranges. Yet here an experiment unique in history was tried, and in the completest manner—that of Pythagoras to organize a city under the government of an aristocracy of metaphysicians. Here, too, or at least at a distance of a few hours' journey from the extremity of the long promontory which protects the harbor, stood Cape Colonna, the venerable temple of Lacinian Juno of which Virgil speaks.

Hinc Sinus Herculei, si vera est fama, Tarenti
Cernitur ; attollit se diva Lacinia contra . .

says Æneas, recounting his perilous voyage to the amorous queen, who listened to him as *Desdemona* listened to *Othello* in later times. "And she loved me for the danger

I had passed!" This monument, the most ancient constructed by the Greeks on the cliffs of this extensive coastline, has not entirely disappeared. But neither the fame of the philosopher of Samos, nor that of the temple mentioned by Virgil, is sufficient to offset the conditions of the journey, which are somewhat discouraging, and, as a matter of fact, hardly anyone stops at Cotrona. In the first place, in order to reach it, setting out from Tarentum, one has a long and tedious day's travel by that Southern railroad whose carriages jolt terribly on rails diabolically laid, and on which there are constant delays. To construct the road in a more economical manner, the engineers have profited by the tongue of land which winds around the lesser chain of this extremity of the Apennines. The misfortune is that the mountain vomits forth ceaselessly those streams which are called in Calabria *fumare*. Dry to-day, to-morrow they flow with a fierce muddy current, that carries away large pieces of the rails. Then, as the track is not a double one, the trains which go down toward Reggio, and those which go up to Metapontum, have to wait for each other an interminable time at the stations, where generally you can scarcely buy

even so much as a glass of unwholesome water.

The scenery is monotonous ; on the one hand stretches the barren seashore, on the other, a strip of level land, varying in width, followed by the high and rocky mountain. On the sea gleam the sails of vessels which go out fishing in all kinds of weather. Along the level land stretch rows of eucalyptus, whose smooth foliage produces after a time a sinister impression. Does it not always announce the presence of the terrible malaria? On the mountains ruined towers, which formerly served as watch-towers, lean forward, and villages frown, suspended on almost inaccessible heights. The peasants who crowd the footway of the station now wear felt hats with pointed crowns, around which is wound a band of ribbon. Gaiters cover the lower part of the legs and, in default of gaiters, cords are bound around them. They drape their cloaks over the shoulder, after the fashion of opera banditti. But the filthy costumes and the hard countenances quickly dispel the romantic illusion. They have almost all the physiognomy of the silent South—that which is most usual, notwithstanding current prepossessions, in the races born under an ardent sun. Their

faces bear the impress of fierce passions, together with that of a selfish, animal, and morose nature. Yet one glorious name succeeds another, labeling miserable hamlets and railway stations, situated sometimes in an absolute desert. Siris, Sybaris, Thuri—the Petilia of Philoctetus—these are nothing. The most patient researches have been unable to tear from this soil the secret, I will not say of the splendor, but of the life of which it was the seat. Sybaris, for example, which we know did not suffer decay, where does it lie buried? We know, too, that the inhabitants of Cotrona, led by Milo—who was at the same time, be it said in parenthesis, an athlete, the chief of an army, and a Pythagorean philosopher—captured it when at the height of its prosperity, and turned aside the course of the Cratis to submerge it under the waters of the river. Its temples, its palaces, its houses, could not then fall into ruin before disappearing. Treasures of sculpture and architecture lie under the sickly grass, on which the buffaloes feed that have given the place its modern name of Buffaloria. The excavators have discovered water everywhere, but nowhere have they found the shaft of a column, a ruined wall, which might enable

them to say with certainty: "Here was the city!"

While I am watching this deserted valley, in which was the city of every luxury and every pleasure, fade from view night is falling—that night of the South where, even in winter, the stars are as large as those of our summer nights. The noise of the sea grows louder in proportion as its waters darken. This approach to Cotrona was the last spot on which the eyes of Hannibal rested before embarking, never to return; and the phantom of the conquered Carthaginian rises before me, as at Tarentum, more vividly than at Tarentum—overpoweringly. This arid beach was for him, as Dresden was for the Emperor, the definitive point of retreat, the place where he abandoned hope. For, to retreat, for these audacious spirits—to abandon the prey they have once had in their grip—is to surrender. They may afterward fight a battle of Zama, they may make a campaign of France, they may maintain an admirable attitude, but it is the attitude of the wounded gladiator who is soon to fall, and they know it. For they give up hope once fortune betrays them, with a power to accept the inevitable equal to their power to under.

take great enterprises in their fortunate days.

"One must fulfill one's destiny," said Napoleon on board the *Northumberland*; "that has always been my great maxim." By a singular contradiction all those great men of action who have abused the exercise of the will are fatalists while those who advocate the doctrine of free will are generally men of thought only—a Kant, a Jouffroy, a Maine de Biran. Perhaps, comparing their projects with their achievements, a Hannibal, a Napoleon, believe themselves to have been guided by a superior power, and to have been blind instruments in the service of an inscrutable Providence. And, then, do they propose these problems to themselves? What are the thoughts, how shaped, that revolve in those minds peopled with visions of material greatness? While I am indulging in these reveries, darkness has set in and the name of Cotrona has been called out by the official on duty. All these philosophical reflections take flight before the vulgar necessity of defending myself against a battalion of coachmen, with the faces of bandits, who fall upon the few passengers that alight from the trains.

At last I am rolling toward the city, in a berlin of indescribable antiquity, disserved by four individuals who strongly resemble the convicts whom I was so simple as to pity at Brindisi. Two of them are mounted on the front seat, one is at the back of the vehicle. The fourth, who has only one arm, runs shouting alongside of the horses, which, by a strange caprice, gallop madly up the acclivities and slacken their pace at the descent. By the light of the moon I perceive immense sheds which serve to store oranges and lemons, then a number of flat roofs. The miserable vehicle sways on the pavement, stops, and we are at the door of the inn—a door that looks like the entrance to some cut-throat den, narrow, damp, low, with a grocery on the one side and on the other a *salone* as the hairdressers of the country have the audacity to call their hole. A stone staircase, steep and dirty, leads to the second story, in which the *locanda* is established. I am agreeably surprised to find it kept, as is so often the case in Tuscany, by a single family, which is a guarantee of comparative cleanliness and good treatment in the lodging. The proprietor is thirty-eight years old, his daughter is twenty-three, and already little

grandchildren of six years, and under, come and go bringing flowers to the stranger. Trifles show differences of locality. I have a friend here whose acquaintance I made in days past, in the Engadine, and when I asked his address the grandmother began a discourse on the antiquity of the family to which Don Nicola belongs—as she says, *à l'Espagnole*; “Eccellenza, lei sa che la più antica città del mondo è Roma.” (Your excellency knows that the most ancient city in the world is Rome.) Then, noticing, my hat lying on the bed, “Ah,” she says, taking it up, with a terrified gesture, “that forebodes death.”

This little Mériméan trait—if I may coin a word to characterize one of those instances of foreign superstition in which the author of “Carmen” takes delight—makes me overlook the simplicity of the place; the more so, as to-morrow, on my way to the port to embark on the vessel which is take me to Cape Colonna, I shall recognize the vicinity of Africa by innumerable signs—in the first place by the vegetation—enormous agaves and cacti, those harsh plants behind which one could easily imagine some dangerous feline animal crouching stealthily, recalling to my mind Tangiers and its blinding suburbs and my walk to Cape

Spartel, the extreme point of the black continent facing Spain, the most striking scene of wild and grand nature which I have ever beheld, with the blue ocean washing the base of the cliff, the torrid sun and the cries of strange beasts among the twisted aloe bushes with their pale foliage. The little boys who pass by on donkeys, carrying casks filled with water, have a way of sitting far back on the croup of their beasts that reminds one of the Arabs and also of the peasants of Andalusia. The city itself, with its houses, all of one story in the poorer quarters, has little of a European aspect, notwithstanding the beautiful palaces in the Spanish style which adorn it, and its castle, which was taken by Masséna at the beginning of the present century. Where have not the war horses of those generals of the Emperor trodden, and should they not be weary when the unwearying man has fallen, he who said to the beautiful Dorsenne on the eve of the battle of Eylau : " You were born in the bivouac, you have grown up in the bivouac, and, if I live, you shall die in the bivouac ! " The population of the town is so evidently mixed that it is like a living illustration of the history of these countries, of the strange blending of various races which

takes place in them. The eight rowers whom I have just engaged to take me in a fishing-boat to Cape Colonna might have been given as a problem in atavism to some disciple of the lamented Count de Gobineau—the most clear-sighted visionary of the race who has appeared in the last fifty years. One of these rowers, the leader, bears a Greek name. But his light eyes, his curly hair, and his ideas, also, correspond exactly to the type of the Norman, adventurous and feudal by instinct, who has so often fought on these Ionian shores. “The family of ——” [and he gives his name] “has always sided with the family of the Luciferi,” he says to me, in speaking of the late elections. At his side two individuals with thick lips, heavy jaws, and swarthy skin, have manifestly black blood; while another, of slender build with aquiline features, would only need to put on a burnous to proclaim himself an Arab. The others show in their features as well as in their complexion, and also in their bearing and their movements, that undefinable something which betrays a mixture of many different races. I amuse myself by forming these fanciful physiological theories—unverifiable, however—about each of the boatmen; then I

gradually forget them, captivated by the charm of the morning landscape, one of the wildest yet most lovely which I have seen for years. Cotrona lies yonder, white and yellow, with its harbor where coasting vessels lie at anchor. The boat left it an hour ago, and is now skirting the cape bordered with gray cliffs that slope down gradually to its extremity, without a building, without a trace of vegetation. The sea, under the hull, is of an intense blue, while in the open it is almost gray under the light of the still ardent sun that glows in a sky to which the heat has given an ashen hue. The sea rises and falls with a slow regular movement like that of a sleeping giant's breast. Seagulls pursue their prey; now hovering in air, now darting down on the surface of the tranquil sea with whose gentle swell other vessels rise and fall. The white wings and white sails gleam with equal brightness. The cape still slopes, and at last I perceive that it terminates in a species of plateau. A solitary column stands upon it. This is all that remains of that temple of Hera Lacinia, of the goddess, protectress of chaste marriages, to which Pythagoras led the women of Crotona to hang in it flowers and their girdles, that mysterious Pythagoras, who,

among so many other sayings, gave utterance to the following one which seems singularly profound to us moderns, delighting, as we all do, in self-torture: "One must not eat one's heart out!" In this temple Zeuxis had suspended his celebrated "Helen"; that painting idealized, says the legend, from the most beautiful young girls of the country, whom he took as his models. In this same temple, Hannibal deposited, shaking with rage, the tablets of bronze on which was engraved a detailed account of his war with Rome. Marble tiles covered the edifice which, to mariners out at sea, marked a stage of their journey, and to the compatriots of Milo, their glad return. The grand and simple soul of the Hellenes is fully revealed in this habit of associating the religious with the patriotic idea. What the traveler first saw, returning to his city, was the house of the gods, of his gods. Waves have tossed the galley. The man has borne the rude shock of tempests, fallen in with pirates, sojourned, surrounded by dangers, among barbarous peoples, braved, in short, the perils attending a sea voyage in those days:

Nudus in ignotâ, Palinure, jacebis arenâ. . . .

This was the worst death for an ancient, to

die unwept, on an unknown shore. But the pediment of the temple rises yonder, the air circulates through its painted columns—his native air—and all his misery is forgotten.

It was with a strange emotion that I myself, after three hours of sailing, disembarked on the arid strand dominated by the column, the last that remains standing of this celebrated temple. As late as the sixteenth century, if the testimony of a traveler is to be believed, forty-three others rose beside this. Where are they now? Have they been broken up and carried away piecemeal, to be used in the construction of some palace or some church, or the mole of Crotona, perhaps? Did they fall in one of those violent quakings of the ground which run, like the chills of an inward fever of old earth, through the whole of Calabria, dangerously near the two monsters, colossal, snow-capped Etna and blue Vesuvius, perfidious as a woman? The survivor tells nothing of the history of her vanished sisters. She projects silently on the yellow grass the shadow of her Doric capital and of the outlines of her shaft jagged and notched by time. This shadow moves with the sun, here where the philosopher of Samos and the *condottieri* of Carthage came, with an imperceptible, un-

interrupted movement which measures the centuries for this wild solitude. Dry thistles and pink crocuses grow at its base. Great green lizards, of the species called celestial, from the turquoise blue color of their heads, dart hither and thither, or bask in the sunshine, on the reddish stones, and below, but a few steps away, the sea, of a slaty blue, rolls monotonously under a sky of a blue which is almost white. One stops, overpowered by so many varied sensations. Here there is evidence of the higher art, the art of the Greeks, revealed in the mere design of this Doric column, with its strong, solid form swelling gently—which, even notched and jagged and crumbled away by the heat of the sun, still remains beautiful with a sovereign beauty. Here are the phantoms of past times, the most fascinating and the most remote in history. Here is the visible presence, as it were, of the great powers of the earth: time, which rolls on forever in its ceaseless ebb and flow, the sea, which forever shivers and moans, the human ideal, which protests unceasingly against the inexplicable caducity with which its noblest works are touched! And as if by a curious irony of fate expression was just now given this protest close beside me, in a re-

mark of one of the boatmen, simple in itself but to which the place and the hour gave an infinite melancholy: "*E col tempo anche questa caderà*," he says. (And in time this too will fall.)

While awaiting this inevitable fall the last of the columns of the temple of Hera continues, even at the present day, to serve as a signal to the fisherman who seeks a scanty living on this dangerous coast, as in the days when the poet of the "Anthology" mourned the fate of those wanderers of the sea: "On this tomb are engraved a net and an oar, witnesses to a hard life." It seems as if the ancient goddess will not consent to depart entirely from her promontory. Not only does no beneficent vegetation grow here, but the chapel raised to the Madonna in the vicinity has remained poor and mean, guarded only by a half-savage hermit, who does not appear to know whether he is a pagan or a Christian. The three or four villas, built by nobles of Cotrona in the neighborhood, have only been habitable in complete security during the past sixty years, and how melancholy they are! They are defended by towers which were erected against the Turks, the boatmen tell me. The first of the faithful, who saw in

the beliefs of paganism the work of the devil, would not have hesitated to affirm what I, for my part, would not dare positively to deny—that here is the spirit of the ancient goddess, who desires to be alone in the place formerly sacred to her, amid the ruins of her ancient honors. The whole strip of land running from Tarentum to Reggio seems similarly accursed by the divinities who once possessed it and who have not departed from it. Here, at least, on this Capo Colonna, the malediction is truly worthy of ancient Olympus, so much of beauty is there mingled with it.

XXVI.

REGGIO, CALABRIA, December 2.

TO-MORROW I shall embark for Sicily, whose mysterious coast I can see, as I write these lines, rising beyond the strait, a chain of bare purple mountains across which pass the shadows of vast clouds. The mountains are motionless and the clouds move always. For an instant, owing to this moving shadow, the mountains seem to move, they seem to live. But the clouds are already far away, and the mountains remain. I see the white palaces of Messina to the right, its lighthouse further on. Following the Italian shore, on this side of the strait, setting out from the quay at Reggio, bordered with its pink houses, I should arrive at Scylla, of dangerous memory, and between the two shores, between the peninsula and the savage coast of the island, is a wide turbulent strait where the great blue waves dash against each other and break into foam, where vessels cross each other—large packets leaving a trail of smoke in the air behind them, graceful sailing vessels bending before the

breeze, their masts standing out sharply against the clear sky, fishing boats tossing on the chopping waves. I know how many beauties she conceals, this Sicily—antique temples still intact, like that of Segesta; Norman cathedrals radiant with mosaics, like those of Monreale and Cephalù; divine spots like Oliveto, the olive grove near Zucco; shores tragic and solitary, like that of Selinonte, and I ought to be happy at seeing it so near, the more so as the last days of my vagabondage have not been favored by the weather. Of Catanzaro, so eulogized by Lenormant, the only recollection that I have retained is that of a city on a steep height, with a harsh unfriendly growth of cactus bristling on the slopes—a muddy city drenched by the rain, chilled by the wind, where Calabrian men in pointed hats and Calabrian women with their legs covered with dirty blue velvet leggings, tramp about in a sink of filth. And what a hotel, comparable only to the cut-throat den of the abominable Foggia. It was in vain that I tried—so as not to have had my trouble for nothing, for the journey from the Marina, called by the name of the city, to the city proper, is a difficult one—to take a few notes of the place, attending court to witness a trial of some peasants

then going on. The brutes in human form who were being tried had had in the corner of a field an affray of a more or less sanguinary character, beginning with blows with a cudgel and ending with pistol shots. But, guilty or not, as both accused and witnesses alike made their answers to the president in pure Calabrian, expressions which might have been picturesque were not more than half intelligible to me. I might, indeed, have had them interpreted and then noted down, but to what purpose? I should have torn those notes up as soon as made, as I tore up all the others that I had scribbled in former journeys in Spain, the Ionian Islands, and Germany. I have seen too much of the world not to know how little these sketches of manners, written from a single observation, are worth. When I should have described the nine wild beasts with sunbrowned faces crowded together on this bench of shame; the advocate, pleading with resounding voice, and insulting the witnesses for the prosecution by calling them *cretini* while his rascally clients were *questi galantuomini*; when I should have described the delicate, angry face of the president, an ex-magistrate from the North, evidently furious at not being able to understand the *patois* of

the peasants, and that of the public prosecutor listening impassively to brutal allusions to his vines and to the quality of his wines, I should have painted a scene from nature. But of what value would it be? We have not succeeded in understanding thoroughly a Parisian workman, a rich bourgeois of the Plaine Monceau, a provincial nobleman. The proof of this is the absolute divergence in the representation of character in novels of analysis written during the past sixty years—since Balzac began to combine description of manners with a study of the feelings—and yet we would pretend in three, six, or twelve months to comprehend thoroughly the inner nature of the people of other countries. The more I have traveled the more fully convinced I have become that civilization has not radically modified the distinctive differences between nation and nation. It has merely spread a uniform varnish over the exterior aspects of those differences. But the race has become therefore all the more difficult to understand, the identity of the exterior forms of society concealing from us its real diversity. This seems a paradox, but, probably, we have less knowledge of one another now—I mean as nations—than in the times when each people had its

national customs. What efforts have I myself not made to understand the English nature, for instance, urged by that taste for cosmopolitanism which was the passion, almost the mania, of my youth ! Books had awakened it in me, and my desire for culture had strengthened it. I have lived at Oxford with students and fellows, in London with literateurs and society people, in Ireland with priests and landlords, in Scotland and in the Lake district with tourists and business men, sportsmen and rustics, at Florence and Venice with æsthetes. If it were necessary to sum up my impressions I should be forced, I truly believe, to say simply that ninety-nine times out of a hundred there is, between an Anglo-Saxon and a Gallo-Roman a principle of mutual misunderstanding and invincible diversity of mental and moral organization whose cause I am ignorant of, which I cannot even well define, without counting that among Englishmen themselves the difference is perhaps equally great, when, for instance, a Scotchman or a Welshman is in question. And therefore it is that now, when I am about to bring to a close another journey on Latin soil, I feel that my reflections on the Latin nature, if I should seek to formulate them, would resolve them-

selves into the same powerlessness to come to a final judgment. To what end, then, rush from railway carriage to railway carriage, from packet to packet, from hotel to hotel to arrive at this conclusion? And I call to mind those of my confrères who, like Jules Lemaître, have rallied me with more or less good-nature on my love of traveling. Were they, after all, right? Yes; to what end wander over the world only to bring back the certainty of the undisputed fact that there are distinct peoples, and that the influences of heredity and environment, working through centuries, have impressed upon these peoples probably ineffaceable differences?

Eppur si muove, as was said by the savant who gave his name to the boat in which I shall pass through the strait to-morrow—old Galileo. And yet I set out with delight two months ago, and I should set out again with the same delight—I know it only too well—at the first opportunity, and it would not be for fashion's sake, nor through snobbishness, nor even for the pleasure of saying, "I have been there," nor in order to say something new. How many roads I have traveled, without writing even a single description! It would not be for love of science, since, in truth, I

am learned in none, as I have only too clearly demonstrated in the course of this diary, nor even from a taste for international psychology, although the epigrammatic Lemaître has called me a "wandering psychologist." I have just said that I have absolutely no faith in the value of observations of travel. My friend Stendhal, he who has passed his life in noting down with so childlike a trust anecdotes gathered in conversations in cafés, is the proof of this. I like his books, however, although on examination I have ascertained that nothing in them is strictly true, since he had the passion for travel, and I believe in the existence of this passion—as I believe in the existence of the passion for play—for itself, and for no other reason than for the pleasure it gives. In endeavoring to analyze this passion I find in it complex elements, some of which I should like to define in order to give to these somewhat incoherent notes a conclusion that should be a résumé, in a manner, of the thoughts scattered through them.

The passion for travel consists, in the first place, in the power which only absence has of restoring us to ourselves. To be far away, this is to be freed from so many duties and so many annoyances, so many tiresome or

pleasant habits! In the carriage, on the deck of the vessel which is taking you away, you find yourself alone and free, not only as regards your time but also as regards your tastes and your thoughts, and the first use you make of this freedom is to give yourself up to nature, to that direct and physical impression of things which weakens and wears away so quickly in city life. In order that you should enjoy travel it would be necessary that you should have remained susceptible to those daily splendors which literature has not spoiled in describing them, because it has never given more than a pallid image of them. It would be necessary that you should love to look at the vast pure sky, the unresting sea, the waving forest, the wild or graceful mountain and—lighting up this eternal scenery—at the cheerful play of light of the day and the throbbing splendor of the stars at night. Do not say that these visible splendors are already too familiar to you. For months past, engrossed in the daily cares of a busy existence, you have ceased to think of them. Man conceals them from you, sometimes your dearest friend; again your enemy. Dare to return to them. You will find them waiting for you. Who has traveled ever so

short a distance in this great world and not felt himself capable of those unique emotions, so simple, so penetrating, which we felt in our childhood—of hearing on a summer afternoon in some wood the hum of universal life, the vague sigh of the earth under the heat, its germination, as it were—to see above the netting of the boat the coast fade from sight and the infinity of water stretch away under the light of the rising moon. They are, indeed, always within your reach, these emotions ; but to experience them anew you must give yourself up to them wholly, as you must give yourself up wholly to art if you would experience its absorbing fever. Do not say either that you have the Louvre, with its wonderful gallery. Confess that you scarcely ever enter it, and you are not so far wrong.

The works of the great masters require, in order to be understood, a concentration of thought which, with the innumerable duties of your business and of society, you will never have in Paris. Absence forces this spiritual quiet upon you, in spite of yourself, and, then, a work of art must be seen in the place where it was composed, under the sky which saw it come into being. The models whom the painters copied still walk about in the streets—

in Lombardy the Herodiads dear to Luini ; in Venice the dogaresses of Titian and Veronese ; in Parma the gracious Madonnas of Coreggio ; in Florence the nymphs of Botticelli. The Herodiad, alas, sometimes sells matches and snuff, the dogaresse measures out ribbons ; the Madonna keeps a grocer's shop ; the nymph is a laundress ; the St. Sebastian, who seems to have stepped down from some Umbrian fresco, serves you a fowl's liver or fried eggs in some country restaurant. No matter. The sublime vision, which the great painters had of the type, through the lowliness of the occupation, imposes itself upon you, as these painters themselves live their lives over again for you, as do the writers whose houses you visit—the princes whose castles you inspect. The strong fascination that material objects which have been touched by heroes possess for the vulgar is not due to a simple prejudice. Our imagination has its basis in the senses, and, to form to ourselves a clear picture of the past, physical contact is almost indispensable. To yield to this attraction without analyzing too deeply its origin—what better way could there be to bring vividly before our minds a vision of past times, to galvanize what was but the dead letter, a vain and cold nomen-

clature, to work that miracle of resurrection, in which Michelet so justly made all history consist?

Impressions of history, impressions of art, impressions of nature—when you have allowed these three currents to overflow, to play upon you at their will, for weeks, there is produced in your inner being a peculiar phenomenon which explains why every long journey terminates with an undefinable change, which is almost always an amelioration, in your nature; you have become more serious, more resolute in the task of self-improvement; more religious in short, if the essence of religion consists in good will. There are two efforts equally difficult for a man of culture, carried along in the whirl and turmoil of modern city life. They seem contradictory, and yet they are both difficult for the same reason—the want of solitude. To live one's true life, to feel one's true "*I*"—this is the first of these two efforts. To give the petty miseries of one's own lot their true place, this is the second. Travel, which restores us to ourselves, also confers this benefit upon us, for, in unrolling before us the vast panorama of life, it teaches us to regard ourselves in that cosmic manner in which lies the most powerful principle of

amelioration. Marcus Aurelius has said: "We should contemplate the courses of the stars as if they bore us along with them in their revolutions. We should think ceaselessly of the changes of the elements one into another. *"These sorts of considerations purify us from the stains of the terrestrial life."* And Plato: "When we discourse on man, we must regard *the things of the earth as from a height*—flocks, armies, husbandry, weddings, reconciliations, births, deaths, the tumults of courts, desert countries, barbarous nations of all sorts, feasts, lamentations, fairs, all this confusion of innumerable things, all this harmony formed of contraries." This work of perspective and *ensemble*, travel renders more easy by enlarging our horizon. How small a place we occupy in the world, the short duration of our lives, the pettiness and the meanness of the passions which agitate us, the paltriness of the accidents which wound us, the relative insignificance in the long succession of the ages of the tumult of contemporary life, all this we feel intensely and intensely also we feel that need, that longing for things eternal, which is the oldest and the surest guarantee of our life beyond the grave. It was not without reason that the Fathers

of the Church, who continue to be the princes of psychologists and moralists—in spite of the confused jumble of microscopic details which our modern science is—compared human life to a journey, and man, who is born to die, to a traveler drawing near to his final resting-place.

Yesterday, after the train that brought me had disappeared around the promontory which the sailors call by the striking name of Spartivento—the disperser of the winds—night began to fall over the great sea, and the sky to grow purple in the west, and suddenly I saw rise before me, beyond this sea, a colossal, dark, snow-capped mass crowned with clouds—vapors of heaven or vapors from its smoking crater? It was Etna. The immense giant, the formidable destroying monster, stood out against the purple background of the sunset. The coast which it dominates was the end of my journey, the safe oasis in which I was to spend the winter, and yet, for an instant, its sinister majesty inspired me with terror. And seeking for an analogy to the grave thoughts that arose within my mind it seemed to me that the final resting-place, toward which we are all traveling, might have for its symbol this approach to an island

of repose, guarded by a terrible giant. Pardon me, dear reader, who have accompanied me thus far in this vagabondage of facts and thoughts, for taking leave of you with this image—a somewhat solemn one with which to conclude these pages of facile dilettantism.

The sage has said: "All that has an end is short"; and all that has an end, he might have added, is sad—even a pleasant and peaceful pilgrimage to a land of beauty. But this is life—a sigh for what was, a smile for what is to be. Let us, then, dear reader, together bid this farewell to Reggio, the rose-hued city, together greet Messina, the white city!

THE END.

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